

THE PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL DEFENCE

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Some people prey upon other people. Whether we like it or not, this is one of the facts of life. It has always been so and it is not going to change. The number of sociopaths in a stipulated population varies widely, but we can take a figure of one in one hundred, for simplicity's sake, and not be far off. About one person in one hundred will, under some circumstances, initiate a violent attack upon another, in defiance of the law, for reasons which seem sufficient to him at the time. Take the able-bodied male population of your community, divide it by one-hundred and you have a fair approximation of the number of possible contacts who just might take it upon themselves to beat your head in. It is not pertinent to dispute the mathematics of this calculation. It may be wrong for your place and time, but anyone who is aware of his environment knows that the peril of physical assault does exist, and that it exists everywhere and at all times. The police, furthermore, can protect you from it only very occasionally. The author assumes that the right of self-defence exists. Some people do not. This advice is not for them. This is for those who feel that anyone who chooses physically to attack another human being does so at his peril. In some jurisdictions it is held that the victim of an attack must, above all, attempt to escape. This is a nice legalistic concept, but it is very often tactically unsound. By the time one has exhausted every means of avoiding conflict it may be too late to save one's life. Laws vary, and cannot be memorised encyclopaedically, but in any case we are not concerned here about jurisprudence but about survival. If one lives through a fight we will assume that he is better off than if he does not, even though he may be thereafter confronted with legal action.

Violent crime is feasible only if its victims are cowards. A victim who fights back makes the whole business impractical. It is true that a victim who fights back may suffer for it, but one who does not almost certainly will suffer for it, and suffer or not, the one who fights back retains his dignity and his self-respect. Any study of the atrocity list of recent years—Starkweather, Speck, Manson, Richard Hickok and Cary Smith et al—shows immediately that the victims, by their appalling ineptitude and timidity, virtually assisted in their own murders. (“Don’t make them mad, Martha, so they won’t hurt us.”)

The First Principle is Alertness

Two rules are immediately evident; know what is behind you, and pay particular attention to anything out of place.

It is axiomatic that the most likely direction of attack is from behind. Be aware of that. Develop “eyes in the back of your head”. Eric Hartmann, the World War II German Ace who is unquestionably the greatest fighter pilot of all time (1405 combat missions, 351 confirmed victories) feels that he survived because of an “extremely sensitive back to his neck”; and conversely, claims that 80 per cent of his victims never knew he was in the same sky with them. Combat flying is not the same as personal defence, but the principle applies. The great majority of the victims of violent crime are taken by surprise. The one who anticipates the action wins. The one who does not, loses. Learn by the experience of others and don’t let yourself be surprised.

On the street never let a stranger approach too close or take your hand. To allow a potential assailant a firm grip on your right hand is to give him possibly a fatal advantage. Use your eyes. Do not go into unfamiliar areas that you cannot observe first. Make it a practice to swing wide around corners, use window glass for rear visibility and get something solid behind you when you pause. All this may sound excessively furtive and melodramatic but those who have cultivated what might be called a tactical approach to life find it neither troublesome nor conspicuous and like a fastened seat belt, a life jacket or a fire extinguisher, it is comforting even when unnecessary.

BE AWARE, BE READY, BE ALERT.

The Second Principle is Decisiveness

It is difficult for a domesticated man to change on the instant into one who can take quick, decisive action to meet a violent emergency. Most of us are unused to violent emergencies—especially those which can only be resolved by the use of force and violence on our part—and these emergencies require an almost superhuman effort of will to transform ourselves from docile chickens into ferocious hawks. Decisiveness, like alertness, is to some extent a built-in characteristic, but, also like alertness, it can be accentuated.

In formalised combat it is supplied, or should be, by appropriate orders from superior officers.

In cases of personal defence it must be self-generated, and this is the problem. When “the ball is opened”—when it becomes evident that you are faced with violent physical assault—your life depends upon your

selecting a correct course of action and carrying it through without hesitation or deviation. There can be no shilly-shallying. There is not time. To ponder is quite possibly to perish, and it is important to remember that the specific course you decide upon is, within certain parameters, less important than the vigour with which you execute it.

The difficulty is that the proper course of action, when under attack, is usually to counter-attack. This runs contrary to our normally civilised behaviour, and such a decision is rather hard for even an ordinarily decisive person to reach.

The law allows you to use sufficient force and violence to prevent an assailant inflicting death or serious injury upon you. You may not pursue your attacker with deadly intent and you may not strike an unnecessary blow, but if someone is trying to kill you, you are justified in killing him to stop him—if there is absolutely no other way. This is putting it about as simply as possible and as the law here is eminently reasonable the legal aspects of personal defence need not detain us in formulating a proper defensive decision.

We must be sure that our assailant is actually trying to kill us and that he is physically capable of doing so, and that we cannot stop him without downing him. So when under attack it is necessary to evaluate the situation and to decide instantly upon a proper course of action to be carried out, immediately and with all the force you can bring to bear. He who hesitates is indeed lost.

DO NOT SOLILOQUISE, DO NOT DELAY, BE DECISIVE.

The Third Principle is Aggressiveness

In defence we do not initiate violence. We must grant our attacker the vast advantage of striking the first blow, or at least attempting to do so. But thereafter we may return the attention with what should optimally be overwhelming violence. "The best defence is a good offence."

Many instances of superior force being over-powered by anger and aggression on the part of the victim spring to mind. I have witnessed a little Corgi attack and run off a large Alsatian, which had entered the Corgi's "territory". Surprise and the ferocity of the little dog's response led to panic in the Alsatian's breast and he fled the scene. That Alsatian, well known in the neighbourhood, had already killed two other dogs. Unfortunately for him the Corgi did not know this!

In another instance two Kobe-Osaka students, unarmed, went to the assistance of two Glasgow policemen who were being severely mauled by a gang of about a dozen thugs some of whom were armed. The aggressiveness of the pair coupled with effective unarmed combat technique so overwhelmed the opposition that they fled the field in total disarray leaving some of their number behind. The two, though not entirely unscathed, had shown that skill and aggression speedily applied could win the day against a numerically superior force. They received a police commendation for their action.

If it is ever your misfortune to be attacked, alertness will have given you a little warning, decisiveness will have given you a proper course to pursue and the third course—counter attack carried out with everything you have.

BE INDIGNANT, BE ANGRY, BE AGGRESSIVE.

The Fourth Principle is Speed

In 1957 at Eastney Barracks, Portsmouth, Colour Sergeant Overbury, our squad instructor, gave us Royal Marines recruits this fatherly advice just before our first "run ashore". "Don't get into any trouble, but if you do, make sure you win". He added "do unto others as they would do unto you, but do it first". Good advice.

Speed is the absolute essence of any form of combat. The stake in personal defence is your life. You cannot afford to play by sporting rules. Be fast not fair. Remember there is no referee to stop the play in the street. The perfect fight is one that is over before the loser really understands what is going on. The perfect defence is a counter-attack that succeeds before the assailant discovers that he has bitten off more than he can chew. Therefore, if you are attacked, retaliate instantly.

BE SUDDEN, BE QUICK, SPEED IS YOUR SALVATION.

The Fifth Principle is Coolness

You must keep your head. If you "lose your cool" under deadly attack you will probably not survive to make excuses, so don't bother to improvise any, just keep your head. Anger, as long as it is controlled anger, is no obstacle to efficiency. Self-control is one thing the anti- social malefactor does not usually possess. Use yours to his undoing.

BE CONTROLLED, STAY COOL AND GO TO WORK.

The Sixth Principle is Ruthlessness

Anyone who wilfully and maliciously attacks another without sufficient cause deserves no consideration.

Just who he is, why he has chosen to be a criminal, his social background, his ideological or psychological motivations, all these may be considered at a future date. NOW, your first concern is your safety, let your attacker worry about his. Don't hold back. Strike no more after he is incapable of further action, but see that he is stopped. The law forbids you to take revenge, but it permits you to prevent.

If you must use your hands or feet use them with all the strength you possess. Tapping your assailant half-heartedly for fear of hurting him will indeed make him mad and since he has already shown that he is willing to kill you he may try the harder now that you have struck him a painful though indecisive blow. Remember that at the time of attack you are your own salvation, you cannot depend on others. By the time help arrives you could be maimed or dead. If you choose to strike by all means strike hard. If you find yourself under lethal attack don't be kind.

BE HARSH, BE TOUGH, BE RUTHLESS.

The Seventh Principle is Surprise

This is put last on purpose, for surprise is the first principle of offensive combat. However, the privilege of striking the first blow is a luxury we must usually grant to our attacker, so in a sense there can be no strategic surprise in defence. That does not mean that the defender cannot achieve tactical surprise. By doing what our assailant least expects us to do, we may throw him completely off. As we have seen, what he usually least expects is instant, violent, counter-attack, so the principle of aggressiveness is closely tied to that of surprise.

The criminal does not expect his prey to fight back. May he never choose you, but if he does, surprise him.

These are some of the principles of personal defence taught in the Kobe-Osaka Karate Club.

Their understanding and application could save your life.

STUDY THEM. BETTER STILL JOIN US. NOW.

3 EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR KARATE IMMEDIATELY

Ok, so you've been training at your club for a couple of years now and your technique is reasonably good. In fact it is the best in your class. When you fight people in your class you find that they aren't really a challenge anymore. You even hold your own when fighting the senior members at your club. Sure, you're not the best yet but it's not going to be long until you are. I mean, who is going to beat you? At this rate, you'll be better than everyone any day now, right?

Wrong. Quite often students find themselves in this position. They fight the same people every week. They get used to their opponents' habits and the way that they fight. They know what to expect and take means to avoid or counter the attack from fighters with whom they are familiar. However, fighting the same people week in and week out does little for self-development because you may be unchallenged. While you believe you are improving, your improvement might only be minimal. You may even find that you are becoming lazy! Why? You are in your comfort zone, doing only enough to beat the people at your club. You are inhibiting your development because there is limited growth in your comfort zone.

So how do you get out of your comfort zone? How do you develop and exceed your expectations? How do you become easily the best at your club and quite possibly the best in your state or country? There are 3 things you can do right now to improve your karate and leave that comfort zone behind.

1. Train with other clubs

A key part of improving your karate is to train with other clubs. Go and train every now and again, weekly perhaps, with another club or style. See the varying views that different instructors have. Try new things. Don't just stay in your comfort zone and never develop any further than the realms of your local club.

Diversify your knowledge and your karate technique will improve dramatically, particularly your fighting. Perhaps you are fortunate and you have all the best karate people at your club. As much as we like to think so, this is often unlikely. Every club, no matter what style, usually has a handful of really talented people. Perhaps your Sensei is an international champion. That's fantastic! You have someone who can teach you an incredible amount. However, there are more people just like them at other clubs too! I'm not suggesting for you to leave your club. I am suggesting you continue to practice your style but supplement your training with input from other clubs.

Get the experience of many different instructors. All instructors have a unique way of communicating and teaching. You will find that some instructors explain things a little differently, which might just shed the light on some things you don't quite understand. Thereby improving your understanding.

You will find that different clubs have a whole bunch of talented people who's knowledge and experience you are leaving untapped. Different clubs focus on different aspects of fighting. They will have different methods of delivering technique. Some will be completely unorthodox and will take you by surprise. You will always be challenged. And the more people you train with from different clubs, the more exposure to different fighters you receive and the more prepared you'll become. You won't be fighting a familiar attacker so your responses will improve and become varied as you learn to respond, attack and defend with new and different techniques. And the better karate-ka you'll be.

2. Train with other martial art styles

Don't just limit your supplemented karate training to other karate clubs. Train with different styles of fighting as well. Try some boxing. Try some grappling. Try some judo. You don't have to become the jack-of-all-trades and master of nothing. Karate should still remain your primary focus if that is your main martial art. However, diversity is again your best option when improving your overall technique and fighting success.

Just as training with new people within karate improved your technique, so will learning moves from different styles. You may not be able to use every single technique you learn from boxing for example, but it helps your self-defence and general understanding of fighting and timing when you supplement your karate training with other fighting skills.

3. Learn from someone who has excelled

The best people to learn from are the people in the extreme! What do I mean by this?

Let's say you're a businessperson and your business is going moderately ok. You know it could improve, but you're not sure exactly what area needs improvement. Given the opportunity, would you go and ask a friend with a business that is marginally more successful than yours for advice? Or would you spend a day with Bill Gates and learn how to improve your business 100-fold?

I know who I would ask for advice. I wouldn't be taking advice from people who haven't yet done what I want to achieve. I would be asking people who I know have already done what I want to achieve. I would ask people with businesses far more successful than mine. Given the opportunity, I would try to learn as much as I could from a person in the extreme, like Bill Gates.

Karate is no different. Learn as much as you can from the very best! Learn from people in the extreme!

The easiest way to find these people is through tournament. This is where you will find the best people from different styles. These are the people wanting to compete at state, national and international levels. These are the people who are giving their all to be their very best. No comfort zone here!

Enter some competitions and find out what it's all about. You may even be fortunate enough to be invited to train with your state or national team. Should this happen, accept! Even if a lifelong career in karate competitions isn't what you're after, the opportunity to train with and learn from the state or nation's best will improve your karate ability unquestionably. And if you don't get invited, ask! Introduce yourself to the state and/or national coaches. Express your enthusiasm. For the opportunity to train with the best of the best is priceless. You will constantly be challenged as your training partners at this level give 100% and keep you on your toes.

Another fantastic place to learn more is by attending special courses or seminars. Many of the world's best often travel and run these kinds of events. Again this is an excellent place to meet and train with new people.

You might think that \$150 is a lot of money to attend a 1 day course. This is an opportunity to learn from someone who has excelled. Even if you only learn one new technique or gain a better understanding of karate or fighting in general, then it will be worth it. For you will gain some insight into the mind of a champion.

In closing...

If you continue to train only with people that are equal or less developed in their technique, you are limiting yourself. If you continue to only do the same karate technique at your club and never challenge yourself, you will never reach your potential. You will not achieve the pinnacle of success while you live in your comfort zone. Go on, get up, go and do it!

Remember, things are easy to do! They're just easier not to do. And most of us only are guilty of not doing. Get to it! Opportunity waits for no one.

5 GREAT REASONS TO BEGIN KARATE

Why should I begin karate? This question has presented itself to every single karate practitioner around the globe. That's about 50 million people. Yes, 50 million people! In this article I'll share with you some of the reasons why you should start karate and what you can get out of karate, along with some of the frequently asked questions about karate. So let's get started.

Reason #1 - Self Defence

In a recent survey we conducted, the number one reason why people started karate was for self-defence.

Why is karate good for self-defence? Karate is an effective self-defence mechanism because it is a martial art reliant on nothing except your own knowledge and karate ability. The Japanese words 'kara' (empty) and 'te' (hand) suggest this in the word itself. Karate is not dependent on anything else and can be applied in virtually any situation at any time, with devastating results, because karate technique targets very specific areas of the human body that are sensitive and vulnerable to attack. You don't need other equipment or weapons in order to aptly perform it. All you need is you!

Traditional Karate consists of strikes and blocks. A strike might be an open handed technique, such as the famous karate chop, or it could be a punch. Strikes also incorporate other parts of the body such as the knees and elbows, giving knee strikes and elbow strikes their names respectively. A kick is technically a strike also. Not all karate kicks are spectacular spinning and jumping techniques like the ones you see in the movies. The reality of karate kicking techniques is that a very small percent of practiced technique involves jumping and spinning. The more practical part of karate kicking involves striking targets such as the knee joints, groin, legs and stomach areas. These targets are easier to hit and less dangerous to perform.

Blocking is as equally important, for if you cannot block, you may not get the opportunity to strike. Blocks are usually done with the arms, using the forearm and sometimes the hands. Some blocking techniques meet the attack head on and some divert the attacking technique. Blocking techniques can usually be broken down into 3 major areas. These being upper level (above shoulder level), mid level (shoulder to hip) and lower level (below hip). Knowing how to block a specific attack is crucial. You need to know what attack is coming before you can block it, and this comes with practice.

These foundations (strikes and blocks) ensure that karate is effective for self-defence. It uses all available parts of the body as effective weapons. And it targets specific vulnerable areas of the opponent, such as the eyes, throat, groin, solar plexus, joints, fingers etc. Karate as a self-defence tool is also for all people, all sizes, and not relying on size or brute strength for success.

Because karate delivers specific effective techniques to vulnerable areas of the attacker, it is also effective in multiple attacker situations. Where other forms of fighting may take longer to achieve the same result, karate is direct. You can sometimes neutralize/counter an attacker with a single technique, which frees you up for the second attacker and sometimes more!

Modern karate has adopted many effective skills from other martial arts such as Kung Fu, Aikido and Judo. Locks, holds and throws are important in modern karate also. It is not good enough just being able to kick and punch. What happens if the contest goes to the ground? Or when your opponent grabs hold of you and you don't have room to deliver traditional karate technique? Skills from other martial arts are usually adapted by modern karate so that you have more options. These can be applied when traditional karate is not suited. For example, it wouldn't be right to kick an aggressive yet harmless drunk in the groin and gouge his eyes when he clearly couldn't do you any real physical harm. Instead you could redirect his force using a grappling technique and then apply a lock or a hold.

Reason #2 - Confidence

Karate instills confidence in the student. Many fears are overcome with karate practice. Even the most embedded fears can be overcome. Do you know what the greatest fear amongst most people is? Wait for it.... It's PUBLIC SPEAKING. Studies show that some people fear public speaking more than death! It's the fear of having to perform in front of others; to be assessed by others. People generally don't like to be judged by other people for fear that they are wrong in what they are saying or doing. They fear they may make a mistake and be ridiculed.

Karate teaches you to communicate with others. It teaches you to perform in front of your peers. And sometimes you might even make a mistake! It's not usually a big deal. Karate teaches you to be at ease, and to be confident. There are times when you will become nervous. There are times when you will make mistakes. There are times when this happens in front of many people. So what! Big deal! Karate will teach you how to survive your mistakes and to learn from them. If you want to take karate all the way to black belt, then yes, you do have to perform and be judged in front of others. Yes, you do have to fight your peers in front of others too.

After only a few months of training most people notice an increase in their self-confidence. Students usually become more assertive in their lives. Karate students learn to deal with issues that they wouldn't have usually dealt with before. This doesn't mean that they start fights every time a conflict arises. That's not what karate teaches you to do. But the regular contact and interaction with other people that karate gives them allows them to be comfortable and confident with their own decisions. Having to perform in front of others gets a student accustomed to performing under pressure, a 'Real World' skill called upon every day. There is no better way to gain self-confidence than to learn to trust yourself.

Reason #3 - Focus

Karate teaches you to focus on one thing and nothing else. And I mean to really and truly focus. You learn to block out distractions. You learn to give your undivided attention to the task at hand. Of course this is critical to delivering effective technique. The more focused you are with what you do, the better the result. This holds true to all aspects of life and not just karate. So if you wish to learn how to focus and deal with what's at hand, ignoring mental distractions, karate training can teach you this.

Focus is not something that comes naturally to a lot of people but through karate training you are taught to focus and concentrate absolutely. Karate is complex. You often have to concentrate on many small, individual, technical aspects at once in order to produce a successful technique.

The untrained human brain can remember approximately 7-10 things at a time. You may have more than this to deal with when practicing karate. If you are thinking about things outside the task at hand, you are limiting your ability to concentrate on it. However through regular karate training and/or meditation you soon learn to focus. The details of the processes I'm talking about are outside the scope of this article and vary depending on your selected style. However the more often you train to focus your mind, the better you become at it. Your brain is like any other muscle in your body. When it does nothing, it achieves nothing. When you use it, it becomes stronger and more efficient than before. Karate can teach you to focus through practiced repeated technique and will exercise your brain muscle along with the rest of your body.

Reason #4 - Fitness

Karate fitness is a specific fitness. It isn't generally aerobic fitness. Why not? Because for something to be considered as aerobic fitness, your heart needs to be working at around 70-80% capacity for 20 minutes or more, before your body starts to burn fat effectively. Generally speaking karate training, while it will have intense moments of high heart rates, gets you training at an average of around 60% of your capacity for the duration of your class. Class duration could be anywhere from 60 to 180 minutes, sometimes longer. However karate training targets specific muscle groups and specific parts of those individual muscles, much the way swimming does. You might know that no matter how much weight work you do in the gym, it doesn't generally affect the muscles you use when you swim, the same way swimming does. Swimming requires more out of very specific muscles so the only way to develop these muscles effectively is to swim regularly.

Karate training is similar. It often focuses on fast technique as opposed to brute strength, so the muscles you work in a karate class learn to fire quickly in order to deliver your technique. Strength is still an important part of your training. Weight training in conjunction with karate often leads to the best results. After a good karate session, you'll be feeling tired in muscles you never thought you had. Karate training really helps in toughening parts of your body as well. Much of karate depends on the strength/endurance of your torso so after a few karate sessions you'll really feel a strengthening and tightening in your stomach and back muscles (great for those of us who spend all day in an office or at a computer). Areas such as the stomach muscles are a just one example. There are lots of muscles that become much stronger through karate's regular specific activity.

Though it's not considered aerobic, karate will definitely increase your overall fitness. It will also strengthen and develop specific muscles in your body. You can expect to reduce your resting heart rate with regular karate training and feel healthier with the continual physical activity karate requires.

Reason #5 - Discipline

The structure of karate is based on a hierarchy system. There is one Sensei (head instructor) of each club. The students are then ranked by grade beneath the Sensei. The Sensei of a particular club may have a chief Sensei (Shihan or Soke), who would be the head of the practiced style on a regional or global level.

If you wish to succeed in karate, you must have respect for your Sensei. You must obey their instructions, no matter how strange you think they might be. Often the student may not see the importance of a particular exercise of which their Sensei might be asking. The student has not developed his understanding to the point of his instructor, so while questioning their Sensei they must be careful not to challenge their instructor. A valid question is a sign of an active mind, eager to learn, so of course legitimate questions are acceptable. However, to attempt to humiliate your Sensei is disrespectful.

So it is always important, as with the military, that orders be followed. There is no place in karate for students who disobey the instructions of higher grades. You can see the similarities between the karate hierarchy structure and the military structure that is probably more familiar to you.

So when we speak of discipline in karate, it can be thought of on two levels. There is of course self-discipline, in which you will push yourself for continual improvement. The drive to go beyond what you thought you could. The motivational struggle of getting out of your chair and going to training versus watching television.

And there is also the discipline your Sensei imposes on you when you fail to achieve; the punishment you receive when you don't listen. The physical exercise and strain your body goes through when you ignore or show disrespect. Extreme physical duress is sometimes used as a negative incentive to do as you are asked. For example, if you were instructed to keep your hands up while you fight and you drop your hands, time and time again, your punishment might be 100 push-ups on your knuckles. The idea behind this kind of training is to instill in your mind the importance of keeping your hands up while fighting.

This type of physical penalty often helps focus the mind as discussed above as well. Generally speaking, people don't like this type of thing and so are inclined to meet the requirements of their instructor. Obviously this is not the only way for a Sensei to get results. It is one of many. And it should also be noted it is not usually the intention of your Sensei to cause you physical distress. Your Sensei wants you to improve, to become physically and mentally stronger. Your Sensei is there to help you, not to dish out unnecessary punishment. You thereby improve your self-discipline again, by holding up your hands next time. So the discipline enforced by your Sensei, turns into self-discipline. This cycle continues throughout your karate training.

In closing...

This article has been written to give you a simple overview of karate and to share with you some of the ideologies and components of this popular martial art. For more information, you'll have to speak to your Sensei or read some more articles on the subject. Whatever you decide to do, there are a few things for certain. Karate is a great way to improve your self-discipline, motivation and respect for not only your peers but also for yourself. Karate can raise your self-esteem and improve your sense of belonging. Karate is generally considered good for your health as it keeps you active on both a mental and physically level and increases your ability to defend yourself in a variety of situations. Overall, the positives gained from beginning karate speak for themselves.

See you in class soon

5 WAYS TO GET MORE OUT OF KID'S CLASSES

We all know how difficult it can be to teach children. They have different needs than adults, different levels of understanding and are sometimes difficult to relate to. In today's society of broken (and repaired) homes, kids often come from a variety of backgrounds and home lives, thus reacting to various outside influences as well. Taking all of these factors into consideration can be mind-boggling for someone facing a kid's class. What system do you have in place to teach children? Do you simply go out and do it or is there a science behind the way you approach a children's session? In the following article we will discuss 5 quick ways to instantly increase your children's performance, morale and enjoyment without giving up discipline, instruction or regime.

To improve the quality of kid's classes you should first try to understand what makes kids tick. What do they want out of class? What are their drivers? If you don't know what drives your students, you won't know how to inspire them to work hard, achieve or behave!

1. IDENTIFY THEIR DRIVERS

Most younger children have an abundance of energy and need a means to release it. This is particularly true in an age where housebound hobbies such as watching TV or playing video games is a common way for children to pass time. You can see this in the beginning of any peewee class (ages 4 to 6). When they first walk onto the tatami they are buzzing with energy, running around, all talking at the same time usually at the top of their voices. This is what they would prefer to do all day, if possible. Their number one driver is to be free and play games. This driver is similar in all ages. Almost everyone would rather have fun than do hard work. Use this driver to propel them to work hard now for rewards (games) at the end of the session. Also understand that their extra energy is not a negative aspect to their instruction. Urge them to use it in class to push them that extra inch, run that extra length, kiai that little bit louder. Identifying their driver will also allow you to plan and structure your lessons accordingly.

2. COMMUNICATE AT THEIR LEVEL

Obviously using gametime as an end-of-class bribe is fun but not always the easiest way to get your point across to a class full of excitable children. Kids attention spans vary in length but it is safe to assume that most are less than an adult's (usually). Since they won't pick up on everything you say in a long tirade about the importance of holding fist a particular way when doing kata, it is best to stick to the basics. The younger the kids are, the more you should use small words, short sentences and prompt them for response more often. Small words are easier for them to pick up on. Short sentences are easily interpreted and therefore can be easily enacted by them. Asking for frequent responses is a great way to make sure the entire class is still following your lead, paying attention to what you are instructing about.

Older kids (teenagers) don't necessarily require small words or short sentences. Go into more detail when you can see that the class is following. As they mature you want to make sure you don't talk down to them. They'll interpret this straight-away as a sign of disrespect and will return this feeling to you tenfold by disrupting class, creating a more difficult situation further along in the class or by simply not attending future lessons. Requiring frequent responses is still a great way to keep everyone involved and for them to act as one with their peers.

3. USE POSITIVE BEFORE NEGATIVE

Now that we've established the basics on how to communicate to kids, let's discuss how our communication influences our students, i.e.. positive- versus negative-based instruction. While there are times for negative incentives such as push-ups as punishment within class, it is important to steer clear of an "I told you so" attitude towards your kids. Goodness knows we've all been reminded of this phrase in our childhood (anyone have a Soccer Mom?) and know the negative influence of not meeting unrealistic expectations put upon children. Positive reinforcement should always be your first resort. Encourage students that struggle rather than punish them for being unable to complete a particular task. However if the child is earnestly avoiding work or not trying, physical reminders are another arrow in your quiver. Push-ups, sit-ups, sprints and knee-jumps are just a few examples of physical penalties that can be useful in enforcing discipline.

Positive and negative language is also reflected in how you speak to your class. For example, it would be most common to say "Don't drop your hands" for sparring purposes. However this is not necessarily the most efficient communication in order to get results with your students. The first thing they visualize is dropping their hands since it is exactly the words you told them. The word "don't" does not instill an image in the brain. You can visualize dropping your hands but cannot visualize "don't". It would then be more efficient

to instruct the class to "Keep your hands up". The mental visualization that is inspired by this positive language is exactly what you want them to do.

4. DON'T DRAW YOUR GUN TOO SOON

Efficient and a balanced positive/negative reinforced instruction does not always succeed with those few "difficult" children. We all know the ones (some of us were them ourselves): they want to be the center of attention and will do most anything--disrupt class, disobey instruction, convince others to do the same--in order to do so. How can an instructor fairly yet sternly discipline these more challenging kids without losing face in front of the rest of the children and subsequently losing control of the class? One sentence sticks in my mind when I think of these situations: Don't draw your gun too soon. Let me explain:

A friend of mine is a police officer in a very "active" part of Los Angeles. While on duty he draws his gun at least once a week but could easily draw it more often. When I asked him about the difficulties of controlling a difficult situation he responded, "Don't draw your gun too soon. Once you draw your gun you've got nothing more to threaten the offender with. You've backed yourself into a corner. If you have threatened the offender that you will draw your gun and then you do so, you can't threaten to draw your gun again. The only option after this is to threaten to shoot unless you back down, in which case you lose all credibility with the offender. You've then lost control of a dangerous situation. If they do cross that last line you have to be prepared to follow through and shoot." He uses all available methods of persuasion, still maintaining control of the situation, using his firearm as the last resort. This gives him plenty of room for negotiation and movement in the situation.

Though the tatami is not south-central LA, the same principle applies. Have many levels of disciplinary action. Begin small and work your way towards the heavier punishments (ie. expelling the student from the rest of the class, expelling them from the entire club). Try to avoid the severe punishments unless absolutely necessary as it leaves you "backed in the corner" with nowhere else to go. Obviously the severity of the penalty must reflect the offense. If a student has punched another kid intending to inflict harm they should not be punished with the same penalty as the child who arrive late to class. Similarly don't get carried away in dealing out punishments. It is easy to lose control of a class when a child is disrupting. Other kids will see this as a chance to test you as well. Collectively they want to see how far they can push you before you "draw your gun". Don't get sucked in! Your karate training has taught you to stay rational and focused. This also means that if you have threatened punishment and the offender disobeys again, you must respond as you've promised them you would! You cannot continue to threaten with "if you do it one more time I will...". Phrases such as this one tell the students that you are not prepared to back up your words with actions.

5. CONSISTENTLY BE CONSISTENT!

The final point is a very important one. Consistently be consistent! Consistency is required in all of the points we discussed above. If you demonstrate a consistent behavior in class, kids will know what to expect of you. So it is important to leave bad days, bad moods, and other negative baggage outside the dojo as it can influence the way you communicate to your students. If you consistently explain in a coherent way, kids know they will learn from and understand your classes. They'll want to come more often because they know it is a fair and fun place where they're taught to at their own level of understanding. They know that there are rules and they know what the boundaries are. If the kids know the rules of the game, they know how to play the game. If the rules are constantly changing, how can they react the way you want them to?

In closing...

There are 5 easy ways to improve your kid's karate classes. First, figure out what their drivers are and use them to encourage your kids to strive for excellence. Secondly, communicate with the children at their level. Use smaller words and short sentences for the younger kids while more detailed instruction is suitable for older children. Third, use positive reinforcement before negative penalties whenever possible. Also incorporate positive language into your instructions ("Keep your hands up" instead of "Don't drop your hands"). Fourth, don't draw your gun too soon. And finally, be consistent throughout your instruction. Incorporated into your kid's karate instruction, these 5 steps will instantly improve the content, understanding and enjoyment level of your children's classes.

10 TIPS TO BETTER KATA

Kata is one of the foundations of karate. Generally speaking, people that have a good understanding of kata, have a good understanding of karate and usually a good understanding of effective technique.

However, kata tends to be one of those things that you either love or hate! Whatever your view on kata, one thing is for sure. Kata is something that can always be improved.

This article is designed to help you improve your kata, one step at a time. If you can achieve the following 10 easy steps then you will be on your way to performing kata at your very best.

1. **Bow before you perform!**

You should always bow before you begin your kata. Bowing is required before you enter the tatami. If you are competing at competition, or performing in front of the class, it is good practice to bow as you enter the tatami. You should also bow again at your starting position. The first bow is a sign of respect to your club and training area. The second bow is a sign of respect to your Sensei.

2. **Announce your kata in a loud voice!**

The beginning of your kata is where you set the stage for the show. By announcing your kata in a loud voice with some feeling, you show your Sensei that you are serious about your karate. Announcing your kata in a loud voice gives you confidence and inspires you to perform at your best.

3. **Compose yourself.**

After you have announced your kata, take a few seconds to compose yourself, clear your mind of everything but your kata and focus on the task at hand. Make sure you are breathing slowly and deeply. Your kata should start with an outward breath.

4. **Pause slightly at the end of each direction.**

This helps you with the timing of your kata. By pausing after each series of techniques, you regain your composure before you proceed with the next series of movements. Of course there are katas that require immediate changes in direction without a pause, but as a general rule, pause slightly at the end of each direction. This will prevent you from 'rushing' through your kata.

5. **Look where you are going!**

Imagine you are really fighting your opponent. If you remember this, it will prevent you looking at the floor (usually a lack of confidence) or up to the left (often a sign of visualising the next move). If you were really fighting an attacker, you would be looking directly at them. Your kata should be no different. Focus on your target.

6. **Kiai and feeling.**

Your kiai is one of the most critical parts of your kata. Your kiai signifies your 'killing blow'. This is the technique into which you put all of your effort. It is the technique that everyone remembers if you do it properly. A strong kiai with 'feeling' shows that you are using all available energy to deliver your technique, just as you would if it was in fact a 'killing blow' to a real life attacker.

7. **Know your bunkai.**

It is equally important that you understand the movements of your kata. Do you know what every single movement represents? If not, learn the bunkai! How can you expect to perform at your best if you don't know exactly what you are doing? By understanding every single movement and the real life application from which kata is derived will help you perform better. Practice all bunkai that you don't understand until it becomes second nature. This again will help you imagine you are actually fighting a real opponent.

8. **Return to the start position.**

Your kata finishes by returning to your starting position, followed by a bow to your Sensei. It does not finish at the last move of the final direction! Make sure after your 'final' move, you return to your starting position and then make a bow to show your Sensei that you have finished the kata. You should then wait in yoi dachi for author instructions from your Sensei. Avoid finishing the kata and just walking off the tatami at all costs!!

9. **Practice small series of movements.**

Katas are complex. Most have around 30 - 60 moves, sometimes more. It's a lot of movements to learn in one hit. Make sure you write down each movement of your kata after you learn it. Then break down your kata into series of 5-6 movements and practice each series until it becomes second nature. This is an effective way to learn your kata.

By running through your kata from start to finish, you will be aware of things you do wrong at the beginning and at the end (this is what the human brain does!). So all those middle bits of your kata that need improving actually receive the least amount of attention. By breaking your kata into series of movements, you can concentrate on perfecting each chunk. Once you are happy with each block of movements, put it all together and practice it as a whole.

10. **Ask for help!**

If you don't know what the bunkai is for a particular part of your kata, or if you are unsure about the correct stance, don't just take a guess at it. Many students skip over, or rush movements that they are not familiar with, hoping their Sensei won't notice. Let me tell you now... Your Sensei notices everything! If you aren't sure about something, ask! As my Sensei says, "There are no silly questions, just silly mistakes."

10 TIPS TO BETTER TEACHING

Teaching can be fun. Teaching can be easy. Teaching can also be difficult and daunting. This article is written for those of you who are thinking about taking the next step in your karate. It's for those of you who are about to start teaching others.

While most of this article will appear to be common sense, it amazes me how many instructors don't do half of these things. So here are 10 tips to better teaching...

1. Plan Your Class.

When you first begin teaching, it's good to have a plan. There is nothing worse than standing in front of a room of students and not knowing what it is you are about to teach. Make sure you are prepared.

Know what you want to work on for that class. Try not to deviate from your plan. It is very easy to go off on a tangent and teach something totally different to what you originally decided. There will be plenty of opportunity to explain those other things at a later date.

Write a plan and stick to it!

What happens to your plan when you originally planned your class for 10+ people and only 4 students attend? Or when you wanted to do a specific drill that requires groups of 5 people and you have 12 in your class?

You better think quickly. You always need a backup plan. You don't want to be seen as not knowing what to do. Remember, students look up to you when you are instructing. You cannot waiver, or show weakness. You are their Sensei. So you need to be prepared.

Make sure you have several things you can work on for that particular part of your class. Being flexible in what you have to offer is an integral part of teaching.

2. Building Blocks.

When teaching a new technique break it down into manageable steps. I rule I like to use is to *work backwards*. (I don't mean to do the technique in reverse. For more on this see the article on [7 Steps to Achieving your Goals](#))

By showing the final application of the technique at the beginning, your students will gain an understanding of the final goal. It's then important to break it down into bite size pieces.

Then show the technique in stages working backwards.

Finally get your students to practice the new technique from start to finish.
eg. Using the Working Backwards Method for teaching a spinning back kick.

- 1) Show your students how the complete technique works.
- 2) Go to the step immediately preceding the impact of the kick. In this case it would be when your back is facing the target, and your kicking leg is raised ready to strike.
- 3) Teach the kick from this stance making sure the kick goes direct to the target.
- 4) Then go to the step immediately preceding the last. In this case it would be the step before the final kick. i.e. the spin.
- 5) Teach your students how to go from their fighting stance into the spin without actually doing the kick.
- 6) Get your students to practice each of the steps in sequence with a slight pause at each step so that they understand the importance of each step alone and as part of

the sequence.

7) Now practice the technique as a whole.

In this example, if you were to teach a spinning back kick in one movement, your students would not understand where they are to be immediately preceding the impact. And frequently they will pick up their legs at the wrong time and miss the target. Not to mention lose balance and often fall over.

However, teaching this way ensures they understand each part. You're probably thinking that the spin is now wasted because we are pausing at each step and the technique is disjointed. Yes, it is at this stage. But remember we are teaching from scratch.

Once you are happy with the technique in stages, you might need to modify it in order to get a better flow. This will be the time to point out some of the finer details.

3. Variety is the Spice of Karate.

Different students want to be taught different things. Some just want to fight all day long. Some want to work on kata. Some want to learn more self defence techniques.

Of course there is a syllabus and you need to make sure you teach everything in that syllabus. No doubt your students need to be prepared for there next grading. However, it's quite often a good idea to break your class into 3-4 sections.

Do some basics, do some self defense, do some fighting, do some fitness work, etc. This helps your students stay enthused in your class. For most people it is very difficult to work on one thing for an hour or two and stay motivated. On average people can stay focused on something for 15 - 20 minutes before they lose their focus.

4. Two Points Per Class Section.

Work on 2 points per class section, not 10-20. Often when we first teach, we are so eager to teach so much. Sometimes we try to cram in 5 years of what we know into 60 minutes! It's not going to happen.

When teaching new techniques or drills, pick 2 things you wish to work on for that part of your class and stick to it. You will then give your students plenty of time to work on each without overloading them. You don't want to rush through your class, trying to force students to learn more than what you have time for. This will simply frustrate you because you don't have time to explain it all. It will also frustrate your students because they do not have enough time to learn.

For instance a simple class structure might be as follows.

0 - 5 mins - Warm Up

5 - 20 mins - Basic Technique

20 - 35 mins - New Fighting Combinations - 2 New Applications

35 - 50 mins - Self Defence Application - 2 New Defences

50 - 60 mins - Stretch & Cool Down

Both you and your students will benefit from this simple rule.

5. Speak Clearly and Concisely.

Karate is a difficult thing to learn. And you don't want to make it more difficult for anyone by speaking softly. Firstly it will appear to some students that you are not confident in what you are teaching.

Secondly a student might not feel comfortable in asking you to repeat yourself when they don't hear you. Their understanding of what you want may not be what you

intended. So please, speak clearly and loudly.

Some instructors talk more than others. You need to find what works best for you and your students. Some students prefer lots of technical information and some like to just work hard.

Remember, the number one reason students begin karate is for self defence. The second reason is for fitness. Both of these require students actually doing something physical. Not just sitting there listening for 55 minutes of your 1 hour class.

Explanation is critical when teaching. However, try to be concise. After your class, ask yourself how you could have said less but still have got the message across. This will help you and give your class more time to physically work. If you are blabbing on and repeating yourself, your students will become unfocussed and bored.

6. Count Slowly!

When teaching basic technique you must make sure you give your students enough time to complete their technique. This is critical. If you rush your count, your students rush their technique to keep up. This results in poor form and frustration.

As you are counting, watch your students. Are they struggling? Or are they yawning? It will be up to you to regulate the count. And as simple as this seems it is one of the things that new instructors get wrong all the time. Like anything in karate, it takes time and practice.

7. Demonstrate Everything.

By actually demonstrating everything you want out of your students, you will also save time. Why? This way everyone will know exactly what you want right from the beginning.

It's also really important to show full technique when you teach. Don't assume that your class will know what you mean. Some simply won't hear you, so by demonstrating everything with full extension on your technique, you increase the opportunity for you class to understand what you are teaching.

8. Time Patterns.

Here is a real secret for you and your students for remembering what they have learned. In his outstanding book, "Use Your Memory" Tony Buzan explains this best.

"First you retain more of what you have learned after a few minutes have passed since the end of your learning period; second, you lose 80 per cent of the detail you have learned within 24 hours of having learned it. The rise is beneficial, so you want to make use of it; the decline can be disastrous, so you usually need to make sure that it does not happen."

He goes on to explain the concept of Review and Repetition in detail. The entire process is outside the scope of this article; however the basics are as follows.

The timing of reviews of learned information should be based on calendar cycles for the most recall. i.e. days, weeks, months, years, etc. This has been scientifically tested and proven.

So how do you apply this to karate?

Your first review of what you taught in class should be 10 minutes after you have finished. Of course this is not always possible because people leave after your class is over. However, if you structure you class so that your students are learning for most of it and then you finish with fitness work, meditation or stretching then you will

have time for a quick review before you finish your class.

The second review should take place one day after. The third a week after and the fourth review a month after. The fifth review at six months, then the next at one year. This is the minimum you should do in order to remember something.

Again this can be difficult for students to learn and instructors to teach because students may or may not train on the chosen days for the review. This is why it's important for both you and your students to keep a journal of everything you learn or teach and review it regularly in your own time.

This is the key to your students improving quickly. Review and Repetition.

9. Be Patient.

While you have similar types of people in your class, each person in your class is unique. Students may have health considerations. Some may be restricted in movement. Some people might lack confidence and some might be uncoordinated. There is no good or bad, worse or better. There are just differences.

As an instructor you need to be able to identify the reasons why students may or may not be able to achieve what you are teaching. Don't be disheartened when you do not see results immediately. It takes time and it takes practice. Be patient.

10. If You Can't Do It, Don't Teach It!

Never try to teach something that you yourself cannot do. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, and it is your strengths that you should teach to others.

If you teach something you're unsure about, you will become unstuck. Students ask questions for one reason - they do not understand and would like to know more. This means you need to be prepared. You need to have more answers than they have questions! If not, then your credibility as a teacher diminishes.

Make sure you are competent. You need to be able to explain and answer any questions that might be thrown your way. You also need to be able to demonstrate.

If you cannot do a hook kick properly, do not teach it!

In closing...

I hope this brief article has been of interest and value to you. I hope it can inspire you to try new things or reinforce those beliefs that you currently have. When you first begin to teach, you first begin to really learn.

If you are unsure about teaching or don't feel confident, I suggest you bite the bullet and give it a shot. This will improve your self confidence and better your understanding of your karate.

If there is more than one instructor at your club, tell your Sensei that you have aspirations to teach. Ask your Sensei if you can sub instruct a class with them. More often than not, they will be pleased that you are interested in helping out.

The benefits to you as a teacher of karate are endless. Not only will you be able to help others improve, but you will gain a better understanding of your own karate technique.

39 GREAT TIPS FOR WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENCE (MOSTLY)

This article is written to give you some understanding of the basics of self defence. It is an extract from my women's self defence class course notes and largely focuses on awareness as being the key to self defence. However, most of the points listed below can be used by men, women and children. I encourage you to do further reading, or better yet learn some self defence or karate so you can give yourself the best chance of handling an awkward situation should it arise.

IMPORTANT POINTS

- Prevention is always the best form of defence. Keep intruders out by having good locks on all doors and windows. Drive with doors locked. Stay away from deserted areas (day or night) and travel with friends.
- Train yourself to be alert and aware of potential dangers. Learn to notice things out of place (someone following, for example.)
- Surprise is a valuable weapon. Your attacker does not know that you are capable of fighting back. Striking first without delay will give you a definite advantage.
- Be sure and aggressive in your response. Don't worry about injuring your attacker. They have made a commitment to do you harm so you must make a commitment to stop them - whatever it takes!
- Remember, the attacker is not looking for a fight. He preys on the easy target. Learn to walk tall and be confident in everything you do. If you are confident, assertive and determined he looks for easier prey.

SELF-DEFENCE IN THE CAR

- Always let someone know where you are going and how long you will be.
- With "Car Jacking" on the increase it is important to keep all doors locked and windows within 2cm of being closed.
- Be wary of strangers at intersections. Be ready to sound your horn or make an emergency exit, through a red light if necessary.
- Keep a torch, pen, paper and coins for emergency situations in the glove box.
- Consider purchasing a mobile for use in emergency situations.
- Keep a street directory handy and know where you are going. Keep the car fueled, oiled and watered. Avoid filling up late at night.
- If your car breaks down, use care and discretion. Phone a friend or the R.A.C.V. Do not accept a ride from a stranger. It may be your last.
- If you have an accident (especially at night) assess the situation before you get out of your car. If you are worried, stay in your car or if possible drive to a police station, service station or other populated area.
- Never leave valuables in full view.
- Have your keys in hand when approaching your car.
- At night always park under a street light or close to shops.

- Always check the rear seat before getting into your car.

SELF-DEFENCE AT HOME

- Have good locks on all doors and windows.
- Install a “peep hole” in your front door.
- Consider installing a security door or an alarm with a panic switch.
- A dog can alert you to an intruder and also makes a great deterrent.
- Always keep doors and windows locked when out and especially when home alone. Avoid sleeping with windows open on hot nights.
- Garages and carports should be well lit and free of easy hiding places.
- Be careful to whom you tell what. Do not “advertise” if you are going to be home alone.
- Never let anyone into your home you are unsure of. Don’t be fooled. Ask for identification, phone their employer or refuse access. If it is legitimate, it will soon be sorted out. It is always better to be safe than sorry.
- Never admit to being home alone. “Stay there, I’ll get it!”
- If you suspect your house has been broken into, do not enter. Call the police and wait for them.
- Have emergency phone numbers handy. Including your local police station and whether it is open 24 hours.

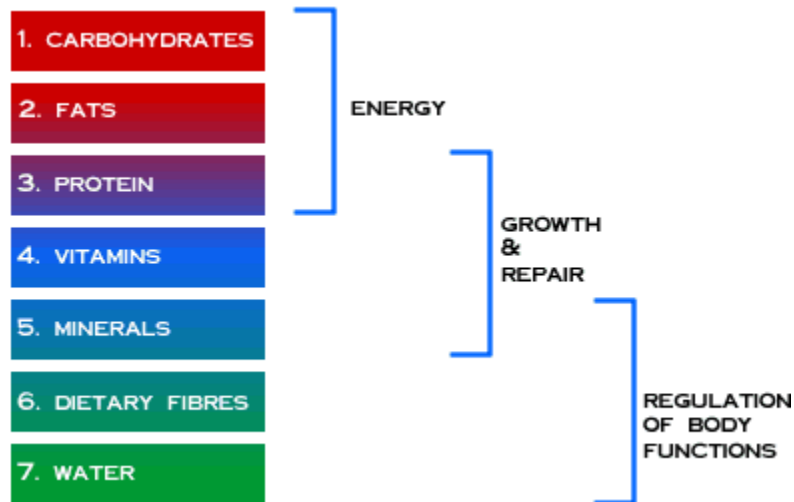
SELF-DEFENCE OUT AND ABOUT

- Travel with a friend or friends whenever possible, day or night.
- Be aware of what is going on around you and alert to any possible dangers.
- Always walk in busy, well lit areas, even if it makes the trip a little longer.
- Avoid taking short cuts through parks, parking lots or alleys.
- If someone asks you for a light, the time or directions, for example, avoid getting too close or distracted.
- Do not accept rides from strangers or hitchhike. No matter how “innocent” the person looks.
- If you are worried about someone following on foot, cross the street or change direction. Head for a shop, office building or where there are people.
- If someone is following in a car, turn and run in the opposite direction. The driver will have to make a U turn before he can follow.
- Wait for public transport in well lit areas.
- Whenever possible, wear clothing and shoes you can run in if you have to.
- Remember to walk tall and be confident in everything you do.

DIET & NUTRITION

This article presents an overview of basic diet and nutrition, which is critical for normal body function. As everyone is unique, and may have different dietary considerations, I encourage you to do further research in order for you to obtain the best diet for your own individual needs. However as a general overview the following information is sufficient to get you pointed in the right direction.

The food we eat gives our bodies the fuel we need to go about our daily activities. If we use good quality fuel we can perform more efficiently. Often when we feel tired and lethargic it can be related to not eating properly. Because karate is a physically demanding activity we must ensure we eat well in order to perform at our best. Whether you are a karate student who simply wants to have more energy and feel better or an elite athlete who wishes to improve performance, everyone can benefit from good diet and nutrition.



Carbohydrates - Simple (Sugars) and Complex (Starches). Eat small amounts of simple and large amounts of complex carbohydrates. They are a good energy source and our muscle cells preferred form of fuel.

Fats - Eat only small amounts of fats. We must still have some in our diet as they are essential for certain body functions. The Australian Recommended Dietary Intake of fat is 50 grams per day for men and 65 grams per day for women.

Protein - Eat in moderate amounts. Protein is essential for growth and development as well as repair and maintenance. The average sports person should aim for 1 gram of protein per day per kilogram of body weight.

Vitamins and Minerals - These are only required in small amounts. The Australian diet is such that vitamin and mineral supplements are not usually needed. Vitamins and minerals come from the food we eat and are required for proper body function. In the case of vitamins there are 13 that we know about and potentially hundreds more that we do not. This is why it is important to eat a good variety of food. Often it is not a case of what is going in, rather what is not, and therefore what you are missing out on.

Fibre - Fibre is important to help reduce the risk of obesity, heart disease and bowel cancer. It can also reduce blood fat levels and improve blood pressure. The Australian Recommended Dietary Intake of fibre is 30 grams per day.

Water - Water is very important and often forgotten about. We are made up of approximately 65% water. Again it is essential for our body to function properly. We should drink 1.5 to 2.5 litres of water per day. This amount will increase with warmer weather and with exercise.

DIETARY GUIDELINES

- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods. (About 20 varieties per day).
- Eat plenty of bread and cereals (preferably wholegrain).
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables (include legumes. Beans, chick peas, etc)
- Diet should be low in fat (especially saturated or animal fats).
- Balance physical activity with food intake.
- Limit alcohol intake.
- Eat only moderate amounts of sugar and foods with added sugar.
- Use salt sparingly and choose low salt foods.

EDGED WEAPON TACTICS AND COUNTER TACTICS:

Edged weapons are amongst the most ancient of implements used by human adversaries engaged in interpersonal conflict. Their use tends to culminate in the premature extinction of one and sometimes both parties. Unfortunately the potential lethality of the blade is not always realized or taken into account when confronting a knife-wielding attacker. There is a commonly held view that a person armed with a knife is less dangerous than a person armed with a firearm. The truth is that within their practical ranges both weapons are capable of fatal life stopping wounds. Some interesting facts include:

U.K. studies:

- * Edged weapon assaults are the most commonly used weapon for killing people (7 in 20)
- * In half the incidents of muggings on men the offender is armed with a sharp instrument

North America:

- * One in three chance that if faced with a subject who had an edged weapon, you will be attacked and injured
- * Attacks with edged weapons usually occur when you least expect them
- * In Victoria BC Canada, our police department has found an increase of 35% in the number of calls that they deal with where an edged weapon was involved
- * In 1994, out of the 7 murders in Victoria, 6 were committed with knives
- * The majority of "street" type people carry some kind of edged weapon be it legal or illegal.

FBI Statistics:

- * Edged weapon attackers are responsible for 3% of all armed attacks of police
- * Firearm attacks account for 4%
- * Both of the above stats represent fatalities
- * Subject shot, 10% die from their wounds
- * Subjects stabbed, 30% die from their wounds

Calibre Press:

- * Since 1980 the number of people routinely carrying knives in North America has increased by 92%

I have personally gathered research form around the world on edged weapon assaults and the following facts emerged during my research:

- * The most popular assault technique utilized by the attacker was found to be the hammer strike – either straight down or diagonally
- * The victim tends to squat in an effort to take a path which offers perceived escape
- * Many people seldom saw the edged weapon that penetrated their body. They failed to recognize the danger cues due to faulty perception
- * Knife attacks were found to be exceptionally accurate, to penetrate deeper than some bullets, creating remarkable permanent cavities and rip through numerous organs in one stroke
- * In reality, within their respective ranges, knives are superior to firearms as far as lethality is concerned

Within its range, a Knife:

- * Never runs out of ammunition
- * Never jams
- * Never misfires
- * Rarely misses target

- * Cuts bone, tendon, muscles, arteries, veins with one thrust
- * Can bring about sudden shock, pain, and extended wound channels
- * It has better stopping capabilities
- * Is psychological defeating
- * Has superior concealment capabilities
- * It occupies a permanent wound channel until extracted, at which time, if the blade is withdrawn from a lung, consciousness is rapidly lost

I have also attended several autopsies involving edged weapon deaths and in speaking with Forensic Pathologists have found the following medical facts:

- * Typical death of a stab wound in homicide cases is 1 inch to 1.5 inches through the rib cage
- * In most edged weapon attacks the victim received multiple knife wounds. The usual cause of death are usually the last few wounds of the overall attack
- * Even short bladed knives can penetrate the abdomen by 8-10cm
- * 3cm allows penetration of the ribs
- * 4cm allows penetration of the heart
- * because of the small surface area of a knife, the amount of force per unit area is TONS per square inch

The above noted information shows the importance of training to deal with such encounters. A person's ability to deal with such situations will be based on his/her TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE. Experience is something not easily acquired, proper training can save lives by preparing you both physically and psychologically. Remember that most edged weapon assaults take place unexpectedly and so quickly that it is not unusual for the defender not to have time to realize that an edged weapon is involved. The attacker who possess an edged weapon usually does not want to convey in any way that he has one, and will usually conceal it until such time as he can deploy it quickly against you. Although a reality, it is a rarity that the attacker will produce his weapon in full view prior to an assault.

As I continued to conduct me research into edged weapon assaults on both police officers and the general public I was also able to identify three common denominators that seem to be present in many edged weapon assaults:

- * In most edged weapon attacks, the defender is already involved in the physical encounter way before he or she even has time to realize that a knife is being used
- * Most defenders see a thrust or slice with a knife as just another punch or kick and not an edged weapon assault
- * It was difficult if not impossible for the defender to differentiate between an attack with an edged weapon or an attack using hands or feet. This was especially true when the defender was not aware from the start of the assault, that the attacker had a knife

I'm a big believer in, "don't tell me, show me" so in early 1992 I conducted an empirical video research study. I had 85 police officers participate in a scenario based training session where unknown to them, they would be attacked with a knife. The attacker, who was dressed in a combatives suit, was told that during mid way of the contact, they were to pull a knife that they had been concealing, flash it directly at the officer saying "I'm going to kill you pig" and then engage the officer physically. The results were remarkable:

- * 3/85 saw the knife prior to contact
- * 10/85 realized that they were being stabbed repeatedly during the scenario
- * 72/85 did not realize that they were being assaulted with a knife until the scenario was over, and the officers were advised to look at their uniforms to see the simulated thrusts and slices left behind by the chalked training knives

When I reviewed the hours of video tape of the above noted scenarios, I also made several other interesting observations in how the majority of officers reacted to the attacks:

- * most attempted to disengage from the attacker by backing away from the threat. This usually resulted in

the attacker closing quite quickly with their victim

* Those officers that did engage the threat immediately, proceeded to block the initial strike of the attacker and then immediately began to grapple with the attacker using elbows and knee strikes, but FAILED TO CONTROL THE DELIVERY SYSTEM RESULTING IN A LARGE NUMBER OF LETHAL BLOWS WITH THE KNIFE.

* Most of the scenarios ended up on the ground

After making these observations, I began to ask myself why I was seeing the above noted reactions. In my research I had the opportunity to read an article authored by Bruce Siddle and Dr. Hal Breedlove entitled "Survival Stress Reaction". In this article Siddle and Breedlove stated:

" research by numerous studies provide two clear messages why people will place themselves in bad tactical situations. The common phenomena of backing away under survival stress results from the visual systems deterioration of the peripheral field to attain more information regarding threat stimulus. Since the brain is demanding more information to deal with the threat, the officer will invariably retreat from the threat to widen the peripheral field. Secondly, the brains normal ability to process (analyze and evaluate) a wide range of information quickly is focused to specific items. Therefore, additional cues, which would normally be processed, are lost. This explains why people can not remember seeing or identifying specific facts which were relatively close to the threat."

The above noted research by Siddle and Breedlove not only confirmed my findings but also answered why our officers were acting they were. It also explains why one officer, who had actually caught the attackers knife hand with both of his hands and was looking directly at the knife, stated "I didn't see any knife" It was not until I showed the video that he believed there was a knife.

Based upon all the above noted observations, I began to research a number of edged weapon defensive tactics programs that were being offered to both police officers and citizen. I attended several programs across North America and in doing so, I found that many of the programs although practical in a training environment, were totally unrealistic for the reality of the street. Many of these programs had several pitfalls:

- * Most assumed the defender knew that the attacker possessed an edged weapon. (what good is this assumption when we know that the majority of attacks with knives the defender did not know the attacker had a knife)
- * Most techniques being taught were too complicated for people to remember (too many fine complex motor skills which we know do not translate when survival stress clicks in no matter how well trained)
- * Most techniques neglected the not so frozen limbs which the attacker still possessed and would use if not neutralized.
- * Most techniques being taught concentrated on controlling the knife hand rather than the delivery system. (the hand moves faster than the eye in a spontaneous attack. As well if cut, blood is a very good lubricant and makes grabbing the knife hand, even with two hands, very difficult if not impossible. To replicate this, use some baby oil during your next edged weapon defensive tactics class)
- * Most techniques being taught were designed to be used against a static (stemming) attack.. (Real knife assaults are not static but fluid and dynamic in nature)
- * Most techniques were designed to be used against what I call wide "Hollywood" motion attacks. (most knife assaults are short and multiple in nature)
- * Most techniques were designed to be used under perfect conditions of the dojo or training studio. (most would not work if fighting/rolling around in the mud, the blood, and the beer of an "open" rather than "closed" environment

When looking for a Realistic Edged Weapon Tactics/ Counter tactics Program you should ensure that you pick one that teaches:

1) AWARENESS STRATEGIES

2) REALISTIC HANDS ON COUNTER TACTICS WHICH FOLLOW THE S.A.F.E. PRINCIPAL. Simple Adaptable Fast and Effective

Awareness strategies start with the above noted information on stats and facts.

TYPES OF ATTACKERS:

There are two types of attackers that you will have to deal with, Skilled and unskilled. Although it is a nicety to know the difference between the two types of attacker, it is very important to remember that both are as equally as dangerous. Remember it is not the skill level of the attacker but rather the desperation factor that makes him so dangerous. As well, in a dynamic spontaneous assault involving an edged weapon, you will probably not have the time to assess your attackers skill level. This is why it is so important that any counter edged weapon program you use, it must work against both the unskilled and skilled attacker. I say:

IF THE SUBJECT PULLS A KNIFE CONSIDER HIM TO BE AN EXPERT

The best defense against an edged weapon is to not get into one in the first place. Watch for edged weapons, this means watching a person's hands. I have stated for years that the only assumption I make in a fight is that the person I am dealing with may have a concealed weapon that I don't see.

By being aware of the ways in which a person may deploy an edged weapon may give you the advantage to with the encounter. This means, get to know the technology available. Visit your local knife/ army surplus stores and see what is available. Also look into how this technology is deployed:

- * Listen for the unsnapping of a button on a knife case
- * Listen for Velcro opening
- * Listen for the click of a lock blade
- * Movement behind the back
- * Drawing motion of the arm/elbow
- * The way in which a person may be packing a visible knife. A buck knife case that is holstered with the snap opening down lets you know that this person had thought about using gravity to deploy the knife quickly.
- * Palming

In my program I have over 50 slides of actual knife wounds that I also show to further bring to light the issue of awareness and respect for the blade.

TYPES OF GRIPS AND STROKES:

There are as many grips and strokes as there are people carrying knives. Is it important to know and understand how an attacker may be holding an edged weapon when it comes to defense. NO !!!!! I believe that the only important thing for you to understand is that the attacker is attacking with a knife. Again, in a dynamic and spontaneous knife attack you will likely not know how the weapon is being held. So if you have learned a system of edged weapon defense that is dependent upon how the knife is being held, good luck using it in the real world !!!!!

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DO GET CUT:

- * Do not panic
- * Consciously make yourself breathe slower (autogenic breathing)
- * Inspect yourself and look for injuries seen and more importantly not seen
- * Apply direct pressure to wounds
- * If injury are to limbs, elevate if possible
- * If you have a chest wound, seal it and protect your airway in case you go unconscious, you don't want to drown in your own blood

- * If you have a punctured lung, exhale first and use an air tight article to cover and seal the wound
- * Mental commitment " I'm going to Live"

PRINCIPALS OF PAT, WRAP, AND ATTACK EDGED WEAPON COUNTER TACTICS:

1) Respect the blade The person who attacks with an edged weapon has two incredible advantages.

- * PSYCHOLOGICAL: has chosen to use the weapon ruthlessly
- * PHYSICAL: usually has first strike advantage

Again remember, it is the desperation factor and not the technical skill alone that makes a person armed with an edged weapon so dangerous

2) Expect to get cut. You will likely get cut, bleed, may or may not feel pain. A program that teaches students not to expect this fact is NEGLIGENT. Your goal is to "WIN" notice I use the word "WIN" and not "SURVIVE". Words are very powerful. The word SURVIVE is no different than the word "TRY". Both of these words to the subconscious mind mean "FAILURE". Our goal is to WIN, survival is a byproduct of winning.

3) Neutralize the line of attack. In any kind of combatives it is important to get you body of the line of attack.. Remember in a knife fight you will get cut and stuck, the secret is to limit the amount/degree of this damage. Unlike a fist fight, you can not stand there and take multiple blows with a knife

4) Control the delivery system. In the system of Pat Wrap and Attack we do not play the knife hand but rather the delivery system (arm/elbow) In hockey do you play the puck or do you play the man. You play the man why, the puck moves to quick. In a knife fight don't visually lock onto the knife hand it moves far to fast when compared to the arm/elbow. We also do not attempt to grab the knife hand in a dynamic situation for the reasons that I mentioned earlier. Small target, slippery when blood is present. Remember than most edged weapon deaths are associated with serious multiple blows. Why, person failed to control the delivery system. The delivery system is the arm (lever), if we can control the lever we control the blade. The only exception to this rule is in a static knife hold up where the knife hand is not moving and can easily be controlled with two hands.

5) Attack the attack.. I believe that so long as the attacker has the opportunity to continue his attack, he has a strong tactical advantage, with a strong psychological advantage as well. Both of these advantages must be neutralized as soon as possible by throwing the attacker on the defensive.

I have been involved in FOUR separate edged weapon attacks which I "won", and I have had one person die in my arms from an edged weapon attack. There are a lot of edged weapon defense programs out there that are designed to get you KILLED because they do not deal with reality. Do your homework. I have attempted to summarize some of the reasons for the development of my 8 hr Pat. Wrap, and Attack system in this post. This system is being used around the world and has saved many lives.

Knowledge and the understanding of that knowledge is power.

Strength and Honor

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FEAR AS YOUR ALLY

A recent study conducted by a well-respected organization in the United States determined that in 80% of attacks on women (I would even extrapolate this to men as well), the predator frightened his victim into submission simply by using verbal intimidation. The mind guides the body. The street predator knows that if he is able to paralyze your mind through fear, your body will freeze also, no matter how much physical training you have.

What is fear? Most people view fear as an extremely negative feeling which causes one to totally freeze and panic, and as a result get hurt. Although this is a common belief, it is not quite accurate.

Fear is both a physical and an emotional response to a perceived threat or danger. The physical reactions prepare us to confront and survive a dangerous situation, by readying autonomic functions for self-preservation and trauma. Heart rate increases; adrenaline and blood clotting enzymes are released to make the body stronger, faster and less likely to feel pain. Although the biological response to fear does not differ from person to person, the emotional response will, based upon one's perception of threat. It is this perception of threat that can, and will, differ from person to person based upon training and learned past experiences in how to deal with the specific threat encountered. What may seem to be a threatening situation to one person may not be to another.

This emotional response to fear is both learned and voluntary. A learned experience is generally taught to you. For instance, if you are a parent who has arachnophobia, and you see a spider crawling across the floor, your first reaction may be to scream and jump on a chair. Your small child will soon begin to "model" his behavior in the same way. Seeing the spider will trigger the learned fear response.

The voluntary reaction is what we choose to do when faced with a dangerous situation. Unfortunately, many people use fear in a self-defeating, negative way rather than with a challenging positive attitude.

Perceived threats trigger our learned and voluntary responses and any three will occur: fight, flight, or hypervigilance. A lot of us know about the fight or flight response, but not many of us know about hypervigilance. Hypervigilance (freezing in place or taking irrational actions) is something that we are all inbred and programmed with from the cave man days, at the "reptilian brain" or "frog brain" level. For those of you that have seen Jurassic Park the movie, what do the experts in the movie yell to those people who were running from the Tyrannosaurus Rex? Why? Because it was "hypothesized" that dinosaurs hunted via movement. Now, let's bring this to the year 2002. Let's say you are traveling mach factor ten down a deserted highway in the middle of the night with your high beams on, when all of a sudden a deer jumps out in front of your car. What does the deer do? It freezes. Why? Does it see the car as a car? No, it sees the car as a threat. What does Bambi do when it sees or senses a threat in the bush? It freezes, in an attempt to not be seen by that which is potentially hunting it. Like Bambi, we have this same response programmed into us as well. Once caught in a state of hypervigilance, it is a downward spiral that once caught into, is very difficult, if not impossible, to get out of. Why is this important? Because the mind guides the body. If the brain freezes, so will the body!!!! Allowing yourself to become stuck in a state of hypervigilance, both mentally and physically, will most certainly allow the attacker to succeed, or will prevent you from becoming proactive in dealing with the situation at hand.

The emotional response to fear, need not be mental immobility; it can be trained and utilized as a voluntary, positive force. An analogy can be drawn by comparing the fear emotion, with electricity. When used positively and appropriately, electricity runs our lives; when used negatively and carelessly, electricity can kill. The emotion of fear is the same way; used in a positive way, the emotion of fear is a "powerizer" and an "energizer". Used in a negative way, the emotion of fear can cause one to panic, freeze, get seriously injured, and in the worse cases, even killed. What you choose to do with the emotion of fear – allow it to control you, or harness the energy – is left up to you to decide, it is a conscious choice, but the decision you make could mean the difference between winning or losing.

So now we know that fear is simply an "emotion", just like any other emotion that the good Lord gives us. We also now know that although the emotion of fear is triggered based upon one's perception of threat, which could differ from person to person, biologically it reacts the same in each and everyone of us. We also now know that when the emotion of fear hits, one of three responses; fight, flight, or hypervigilance, will take place. Based upon what I just shared with you about the hypervigilant state, I think you will agree that we

want to pick the “fight” or “flight” response. How do you choose fight or flight and not the hypervigilance response? The answer is simple in concept; ask yourself: “Am I threatened or am I challenged?”

To understand this concept, place yourself on the following scenario: You are in an office building that has thirty floors, and wanting to go to the top floor, you decide to use the elevator. When the elevator arrives, with no one inside, you enter and start your ascent. Arriving at the tenth floor, the door opens and standing in front of you is an unknown male, 6’5”, 250 pounds, built like a Mac truck, brandishing a knife and saying, “shut up and I won’t hurt you, if you scream, you’re dead.” Now ask yourself, “Am I threatened or am I challenged?” Most people, when faced with this situation, will say they are threatened.

The brain makes decisions for the future based upon past experience and training; it guides the body. No matter how much physical training you have to deal with an attacker who is about to assault you, if you stay in the “threatened” mindset, you will go into hypervigilance mode, come to a paralytic standstill, and be at the mercy of the attacker. Because of this fact, you need to get “CHALLENGED.”

How do you get from a “threatened” mindset to a “challenged” mindset? By consciously saying the word “BUT.” In the elevator, when the door opens and you are faced with the attacker armed with the knife, what should be going through your mind is, “I’m in a bad situation, BUT if he takes another step, I will

The powerful word “BUT” challenges the brain and allows it to work and think. When I give lectures on this topic, I always lead my audience up to the point where I ask them this question: “There is one little three letter word that will change your mindset from threatened to challenged, do you want to know what that word is?” At this point I pause for about three seconds, and then I say the word “BUT”. It is amazing to see the expressions on people’s faces. I then share with them that as soon as I said the word “BUT” most of the audiences brains asked themselves, “BUT what?” As soon as the brain goes “But What”, the brain now begins to work. It can now find answers to the questions it is being faced with, such as, “How am I going to get out of this situation as quickly and safely as possible.” Once the brain is allowed to work, the physical training and experiences you may have can now be applied. In other words, instead of freezing into a complete standstill, you begin to take some action to protect yourself.

A good self-protection program with “realistic” scenario based training is beneficial not only in teaching you physical strategies, but in helping you realize that you CAN use fear to your advantage. However, even if you do not have the self-protection training or life experiences to deal with a specific threat, the “CHALLENGED” brain will begin to adapt, overcome, and improvise to find a way for you to stay safe. There are hundreds of instances in which men and women with no prior self-protection training, have physically resisted their attackers and “won.” Why? They CHALLENGED themselves.

As previously stated, in 80% of attacks on women, the predator used only verbal intimidation to scare his victim into a submissive state of hypervigilance. To overcome this, you must allow the brain to work, challenge it to mentally figure a way out of the dangerous situation, and to physically release the “internal warrior” that the emotion of fear can stimulate. Decide to focus and direct the mental and physical forces into a powerful attack of your own, and allow the full impact of the fear response to propel your mind, body, and soul against the your attacker. Fear can be your greatest ally in a dangerous situation, but it can also be your worst enemy. THE CHOICE IS ULTIMATELY YOURS TO MAKE !!!!!

What I have just shared with you, you can practice in your everyday life. I share with you, this personal experience to demonstrate this fact:

I was one of the youngest sergeants ever to be promoted in my police department. While in the promotional process, the last stage was an interview in front of a panel consisting of the Chief of police, the Deputy Chief, a Police Board member, and a City Counselor. My interview was set for 2pm, so I was there at 1:45pm. The panel knowing of my early arrival, waited until 2:30pm to call me in. Why? They wanted to sweat me !!!! As I was waiting for my interview, I noted that my heart rate and breathing had increased, I was sweating, my mind was racing a mile a minute, at which time I asked myself; “Am I threatened or am I challenged.” I immediately identified the fact that I was “THREATENED” Upon comprehending this fact, I knew that if I went into this interview in this mindset, I would choke (go into a state of hypervigilance) !!!! How many of you have heard of this happening to someone, or experienced this yourself. Immediately upon recognizing my state of mind, I said that magical, but very powerful word, “BUT”. As soon as I said “but”, I

stopped sweating, my mind slowed, and my heart rate and respirations decreased. I went into my interview in a now "CHALLENGED" mindset and as a result, did very well, and got myself promoted.

Why did I share the above noted experience with you the reader?, because in my 15 year career as a police officer, I have been attacked with an edged weapon on four separate occasions. In each one of these edged weapon encounters, the biological effects of fear that I felt were no different than those I experienced during my sergeant interview. Remember, fear is strictly an emotion, IT DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE. What you choose to do with the emotion of fear, is left up to you to decide and to practice !!!!!!!

Strength and Honor

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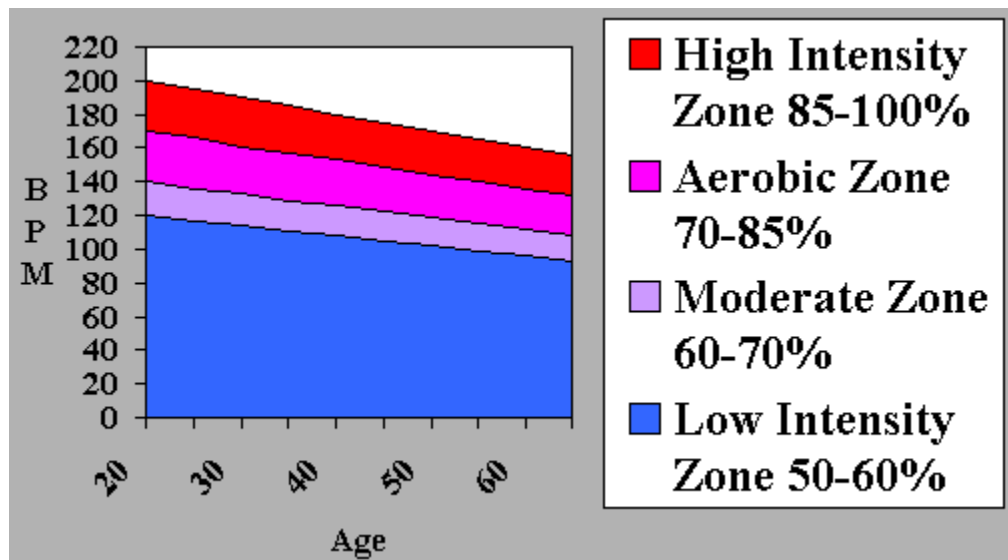
HEART RATES AND KEEPING FIT

Our heart pumps blood and nutrients around our body. Our lungs provide the oxygen required to sustain life and physical activity. The more demanding the physical activity the greater the work load on our heart and lungs. As we exercise, our heart rate and breathing increases. Heart rate at rest and during exercise can give us an indication as to how physically fit we are and how hard we are working.

Resting heart rate can be used as a general guide to measure fitness. A normal resting heart rate is around 60 - 80 beats per minute.

For increased fitness and performance we need to exercise 3 to 5 times per week for a minimum of 30 minutes to 1 hour. During this time we must elevate our heart rate. We need to maintain 60% to 70% of our maximum heart rate (maximum heart rate being 220 beats per minute minus your age). Using the table above we can monitor our progress and ensure we are working to improve fitness or performance.

Another indicator of general fitness is how quickly our heart rate returns to it's resting level after exercise. Check your heart rate 1 and 2 minutes after exercise.



AEROBIC & ANAEROBIC EXERCISE

Anaerobic Exercise - Anaerobic activities are shorter duration activities that involve more speed and power rather than endurance. Energy comes primarily from stores within the muscles themselves which is why, as we deplete these stores, we get that burning feeling. Karate is an Anaerobic activity. While the class may last more than an hour and involve some Aerobic content, the movements we make are based on fast explosive type actions. Other Anaerobic activities include sprinting and High Jump.

Aerobic Exercise - Aerobic activities are of a longer duration and generally require more endurance and less speed and explosion. Energy comes from the air we breath in which is why we can maintain the activity longer. Examples of Aerobic activities include long distance running and cross country skiing.



CROSS TRAINING FOR KARATE

Karate and martial arts in general, are excellent all round activities. Karate works all the major muscle groups as well as heart and lung fitness. Even though we do not have to, we can supplement our training with other activities. Because karate is an Anaerobic or power based activity, weight training can be of great benefit. We also place a great deal of importance on explosive leg power so sprint training is an excellent complementary activity. Distance running or swimming laps will further improve our heart and lung fitness, which can only be of benefit. The types of training and variations are endless. Variety is the spice of life and this is very true for physical training. If you are working hard and having fun, it is all good all good. Move it or lose it!



HOW TO REMEMBER EVERYTHING YOU LEARN (ALMOST!)

For the first 5 years of my karate, every time I trained I learned something new. Either a new technique or the development of an existing technique, a new kata, a new philosophy, a new fighting combination or tweaking an existing combination. Today in my sixteenth year of martial arts I still learn new techniques. It doesn't happen as often as in those first five years, but I'd like to think I continue to improve what I began all those years ago.

So after fifteen years I have learned the best way to remember and develop karate over time, is to keep a journal. Keep a journal of what you learn and add to it, as needed. It would be fair to say that each karate lesson may cover several different aspects of karate. The lesson may include some self-defence, some kata and new fighting combination. It would also be fair to say, that we don't remember everything we learn in class. (In fact we forget 80% of the detail of what we learn within 24 hours, if not revised.*)

For most of us, we will forget a substantial portion of what we learn today within a week. We may remember the basics of the lesson, but many of the fine points are forgotten. And it's the finer details that make all the difference in the effectiveness of our technique. Wouldn't you agree? Do you recall exactly what you learned last week when you trained down to the smallest detail?

By keeping a journal you can keep track of all those things that you would have otherwise forgotten. You will need to review it often in order to keep the information fresh in your mind. (If you want to learn how to improve your memory, check out a book by Tony Buzan called Master Your Memory.)

One of the great things about keeping a karate journal is that you can look back at it down the track and modify techniques that you previously created. Or you can call on more than one of the techniques you wrote in your journal and create a whole new combination. You can clean up your kata & brush up on those fighting techniques you rarely use by reviewing your journal. It is an exceptionally useful tool before a grading or a tournament.

A good way to structure your journal, is to break it into segments then by date, rather than break it down by date and then into categories. One downfall of structuring the journal by date and then by category, is that when you come back and add to a particular section, you run out of room quickly. By breaking it up by category then by date you can add more pages to a particular category as needed. Because each segment is also chronological, you see your development as your journal grows. You can also look back and see how your technique builds on previous ideas you have recorded.

Using a 2 or 3 ring binder as your journal allows you to simply add pages as you go. That way each category can grow by itself, without overlapping or bumping into the next.

So what categories can you break karate into? That's the easy part, and the suggestions below are by no means the only way. Depending on your personal preferences and your style, you can modify this structure to suit.

The most common categories are Kumite, Kata, Basic technique, Self-defence, Fitness and Strength. Kumite can be broken down further into dojo, competition and street. Kata can be broken down by the kata names and then by version if you learn more than one version for a particular kata. Basic Technique can be broken into Stances, Blocks and Strikes. Self-defence can be broken down into Standing and Ground. Fitness would include exercises done to increase your performance. eg. Sprints, Fighting drills etc. Strength includes exercises like Chinups, Situps, Pushups etc.

Ok. You now have a basic structure, what next?

After each lesson, write down in the appropriate section of your journal what you have learned in that lesson. If you have information on that particular technique just append to what you already have. There is no need to rewrite previous information. Adding instead of rewriting information allows you to keep your information concise which is easier to recall at a later date. And because it is broken into sections, you can study a particular aspect at any given time. You can then remain focussed on what you're working on without being distracted by something irrelevant.

Here is an example of what a section of a typical journal might look like. Remember, your journal must mean something to you. It must be formatted in a way that is useful to you. If it's not, then it won't be fun and you won't use it. The following excerpt is an example only and should not be considered as the be-all, end-all of journal entries.

Section Category - Kumite

Sub Section - Competition

20 March 88 - Learned the importance of keeping on the balls of the feet. Helps you be dynamic. Much faster, much easier to move around. Keep back foot facing forward, not sideways.

23 March 88 - Make sure you are getting out of the way after scoring or after you have finished attacking. Don't stay in close. You increase your chance of being hit as you are presenting a target to your opponent. I got hit several times tonight from not getting out in time and dropping my guard. Remember, hands up and push out or break the line.

1 April 88 - Hands up again! Push out! Also learned new fighting technique. A triple technique - Reverse punch, back fist, reverse punch - this is done with the triple shuffle. Reverse punch on the spot, step back foot up and make back fist strike towards the face with front hand, slide front foot in with reverse punch. It's a long distance technique, primarily used for opponents who shuffle or step backwards.

4th April 88 -

Etc.

You can make your journal electronic. Simply use a text editor like Microsoft Word or a similar program you are familiar with. The benefits for electronic journal are

- It is neat.
- It can be stored digitally so you can have it forever.
- It is easy to add pages.
- Pages can be printed out and added to your binder.
- You can leave space to add drawings, either by hand, or with your graphics program if you have one.
- You can use the "search" or "find" function to locate a particular technique without flipping through hundreds of pages.

Whatever structure you choose, there is no doubt that this is a powerful way to record and recall information. Think about it. Where has history been recorded most accurately for centuries? In books, not just in our minds!

References - The Mind Map Book - Tony Buzan, Use your Memory - Tony Buzan

HYPNOSIS, NLP, AND THE COMBATIVE EDGE

I truly believe that Hypnosis and NLP it is going to be the next "nexus" in combative training. Let me explain

As trainers, we attempt to make the trained response the dominate response. How do we do this, by teaching gross motor skills and utilizing the training techniques of REPETITION and scenario based training.

As a Certified Hypnotherapist CHt. (My training was through a company called the "Meridian Institute, 180hrs of training, and my Certification is through the "International Medical and Dental Hypnotherapy Association"), at my school I have not only been able to increase retention and usability of specific motor skills through Hypnosis and NLP techniques, but I have been able to decrease the amount of time needed to get the specific motor skill taught to be downloaded into the subconscious mind. What does this mean, when hypnosis is used with physical repetition, the amount of time needed to become unconsciously competent is decreased dramatically !!!! This is a training technique that both amateur and professional athletes have been using for years.

Traditionally, trainers have used lots of repetition to pound a specific motor skill through the conscious/ critical mind, and into the subconscious mind. Through hypnosis, we can take a motor skill program, and directly download it (by-passing the conscious/critical mind) into the subconscious. It must be understood however, that hypnosis is not an alternative to actual physical repetition, but when used in conjunction with repetition, hypnosis can greatly increase motor skill performance and warrior instinct !!!

Here is one way that I use hypnosis to increase motor skill performance:

Step #1:

New motor skill taught and chunked until student is consciously competent

Step #2:

Once student is consciously competent, induction into state of hypnosis where I now download program into subconscious.

Step #3:

Once Motor Skill program has been downloaded into subconscious, student is taken through a guided imagery session, where the motor skill taught is being utilized in a real world scenario.

Step #4:

Student is exited from hypnosis, and motor skill is again physically practiced. From my experience, you can usually see immediate results.

On average, depending upon the motor skill being learned, 6-12 sessions of hypnosis are utilized. A fellow police trainer has found for firearms training, an increase in performance can take place after only ONE session.

I also teach my students, to utilize self-guided imagery session, which only enhances and compounds the specific Motor Skill(s)

The science and art of hypnosis and NLP are two tools that all trainers should be utilizing with students. Like any tool, get professional training and certification first. Do your homework, there are a number of schools out there that advertise that they offer "certified hypnotherapist" and "NLP" training, but really don't, and only want to take your money. My CHt training was over 180hrs.

To my knowledge, there are only two individuals presently using hypnosis and NLP in combatives training, myself and a fellow police trainer by the name of Brian Willis. In fact, the FBI is so impressed with Brian's results, they have sent representatives from Quantico's physical training branch to look into what is being done by us Canadians.

Yes, Gross motor skills are easily learned through repetition, but with the inclusion of hypnosis and NLP, they are learned faster and in combative context. Remember, the subconscious mind cannot tell the difference between fantasy and reality. Through proper and professional guided imagery sessions (hypnosis), I can place my students in "any" combative situation where they are there in mind, body, and spirit. This is very powerful due to the 7 "P" principal of personal safety : "proper pre-planning prevents piss poor performance"

Hypnosis and motor skill performance enhancement is real. Both amateur and professional athletes have been using it for years (I suggest you read a book called " The Mental Edge") Unfortunately, as a professional Hypnotherapist, I must fight the myths surrounding this topic because of what stage hypnotists do. I too was a non-believer until I was exposed to it. I'm a big believer in "don't tell me something is going to work, show me it is going to work" The results that I have seen, as well as other trainers, speak for themselves.

This is not Voodoo or sitting on a mountain to be enlightened. Hypnosis is both a science and art that CAN and WILL give a Combative Edge !!!!!

Strength and Honor

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JAPANESE KARATE TERMINOLOGY AND GENELOGICAL MAP

Do you know your Japanese Karate Terminology? It is important if you practice a traditional style of karate, that you are aware of at least some of the more frequent terminology used in class. You do not have to be fluent in Japanese to understand the basic terminology. With a little practice you'll be surprised how easy your karate terminology is to learn once you get the basics under your belt. This article introduces the basics of Japanese karate terminology

We've also included a Karate Geneological Map for you. This displays the major karate organization and shows their points of origin.

One of the first things you will learn in traditional karate is to count in Japanese. So here are the Japanese and English translations.

Japanese	English Translation
ichi	one
ni	two
san	three
shi	four
go	five
roku	six
shichi	seven
hachi	eight
gu	nine
ju	ten
ichi ban	first
ni ban	second
san ban	third
yon ban	fourth
go ban	fifth
roku ban	sixth
nan ban	seven
hachi ban	eight
kyu ban	nine
ju ban	ten
<i>Just to make it more confusing!</i>	
shodan ho	first dan (probationary)
shodan	first dan
nidan	second dan
sandan	third dan
yondan	fourth dan
godan	fifth dan

Japanese	English Translation
The basics	
Soke	founder
Shihan	master
Sensei	teacher
Sempai	senior student
Kohai	student
dojo	karate school
tatami	training area
makiwara	punching board
gi	karate uniform

hara	abdominal tension
kime	focus
kihon	basics
kumite	sparring
kata	pre arranged form of movements
koshi	ball of foot
ma-ai	distancing
sanchin	awareness

zuki or tsuki	punch
geri	kick
uchi	strike
uke	block
dachi	stance

ken	knuckle
kage	hook
mawashi	roundhouse
ushiro	back

The basic stances

heiko dachi	heels together toes apart with straight legs
gankaku dachi	crane stance
kake dachi	one knee pressed in the back of the bent front leg
kiba dachi	horse stance similar to shiko dachi but feet face forward
kokutsu dachi	back stance
musubi dachi	heels together, toes apart at 90 deg
neko ashi dachi	cat stance
sanchin dachi	hour glass stance
shiko dachi	sumo stance
shizen dachi	open leg stance before "yoi"
shizen dachi heiko	"yoi dachi" feet shoulder width apart facing forward
sochin dachi	diagonal straddle leg stance
yoi dachi	ready stance feet shoulder width apart
zenkutsu dach	forward stance

The levels

jodan	above shoulder level
chudan	middle area between hips and shoulder
gedan	lower area below hips

The commands

hajime	begin / start
kamae te	on guard
mawate	turn around / change direction
seiza	to kneel or sit back on heels
yame	stop
yasame	relax, stand at ease
yoi	ready

The punches

age zuki	rising punch
awase zuki	combined punch
choko zuki	straight punch
gyaku zuki	reverse punch
hiraken zuki	fore knuckle fist straight punch (second joints of fingers)
ippon ken zuki	one knuckle punch
kage zuki	hook punch
kizami zuki	front jab
mae ken zuki	front hand punch (vertical fist)
mawashi zuki	roundhouse punch
morote zuki	double fist punch

oi zuki	lunge punch (step over punch)
tataken zuki	as above
teisho zuki	palm heel straight punch
tettsui	hammer fist
ura zuki	close punch
yama zuki	double handed U punch

The strikes

empi uchi	elbow stike (also called hijiatei)
haishu uchi	backhand strike
keito uchi	chicken head strike
haito uchi	ridge hand strike
hiraken	punch using the second knuckles of the hand (towards throat)
mawashi uke	circular block
nukite	spear hand strike
shotei	palm heel strike towards chin or nose
shuto uchi	knife hand strike towards side of neck - the karate chop!
teisho	palm heel strike towards other areas such as inner bicep
uraken	back knuckle strike

The blocks

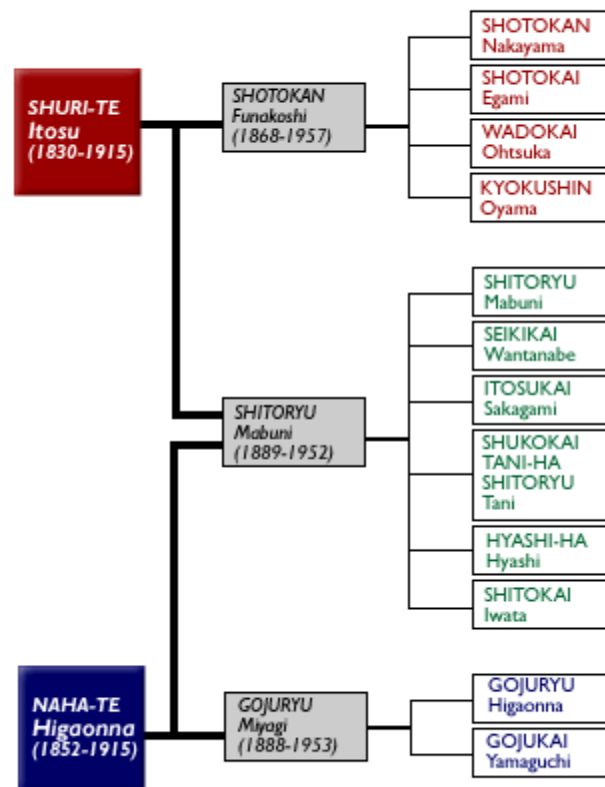
jodan age uke	upper rising block
chudan ude uke	mid section across the body block using forearm
chudan uchi uke	mid section inside out block using forearm
gedan barai	lower block
jiji uke	cross block
kake te	hooking hand (for grabbing)
kake uke	hooking block
mine uke	backhand block with bent wrist
morote uke	two hand forearm block
nami ashi	inside snapping block with foot
nagashi uke	open hand pushing block
osae uke	pressing hands
shuto uke	knife hand block
sukui uke	sweeping block (for mae geri)

The kicks

ashi barai	foot sweep
fumakomi geri	stomping kick
hiza geri	knee strike
kansetsu geri	stomping or joint kick usually to knee joint
kin geri	front snap kick to groin using instep
mae ashi geri	rising shin kick (half way between mae geri and mawashi geri)
mae geri	front kick
mawashi geri	roundhouse kick
mikazuki geri	crescent kick
yoko geri keage	side kick (snapping)
yoko geri kekomi	side kick (thrusting)
yoko tobi geri	flying side kick
ura mawashi geri	hook kick
ushiro geri	back kick

Karate Geneological Map

major karate organizations



KARATE AND STRETCHING

INTRODUCTION

Some of the best exponents of Karate in the world share a common ability - flexibility - and it is obtainable by all.

Almost all athletes in any sport would wish to improve in this area and this article aims to build on your own knowledge base and to do just that. If you are looking to improve your karate in general and your fighting ability in particular, look no further than improving your flexibility. Unfortunately there is no magic pill or overnight fix in this regard - yet there are more effective ways to stretch than others.

BENEFITS

Whether you have been training for a while or just beginning, you will know flexibility is important for your kicking ability. What may not have occurred to you is that it is extremely important to have good flexibility in your supporting leg as well as your kicking leg, and that is why some of you find it easier to kick with your non dominant leg.

Flexibility helps not just the reach of your kicks but also the power of your kicks. Imagine being able to hold your leg up in the air with a minimum of effort rather than using all your effort just to stretch your tight hamstrings and adductor muscles. You could then use the antagonists to these muscles - the hip flexors, quadriceps and adductors - to deliver a powerful blow to your opponent. Being generally flexible helps your fluidity of movement - very important for both kata and kumite.

Having spinal flexibility helps your general ability to move well and stay healthy but also helps your ability to 'coil' and 'uncoil' - to torque yourself - to deliver power to both hand and foot strikes. It also enables you to 'duck and weave' effectively and even to move well for such moves as throwing and grappling.

Of course alongside the benefit of improved performance, being flexible has the major benefit of injury prevention.

ANATOMY

There are three basic tissues to stretch in the body to gain flexibility - the muscles, the joint capsules/ligaments and the nerves.



Using the leg and hip as an example, the classic lunge stretch is a muscular stretch for the hip flexor muscle. This is performed by placing one foot forward and one foot back - the knee of the back leg is dropped to the floor, you lean forward keeping your trunk upright. You can feel a certain amount of 'give' with this stretching through the front of your hip - a nice stretch that feels good.

Lying on your back with soles of your feet together and knees stretched apart stretches your adductor muscles but is mainly a hip capsule and ligamentous stretch. This stretch has less 'give' - it has more of a solid end feel. It probably doesn't feel easy and is less elastic. Capsules and ligaments are much harder to gain flexibility through - it takes long thorough stretching to gain flexibility.





The classic hamstring stretch - sitting with one leg out straight and reaching forward to touch your toes - is actually as much of a nerve stretch (the sciatic nerve) as a muscular stretch. Bending the knee slightly takes the nerve off the stretch and makes it a pure muscular stretch. With your leg straight you know you are stretching the nerve with the tight feeling in the back of the knee - not in the belly of the hamstring muscle.

Nerves are more elastic than ligaments but less than muscles. Like ligaments they take a long time to gain length with stretching. Some researchers think it is not a good idea to strongly stretch the sciatic nerve immediately before exercise as it can upset the impulses going through it leading to less muscle control. They think it may contribute to hamstring strains. My view is that it is better to strongly stretch the nerve after exercise when you are very warm and beginning the cool down phase.

To summarise, muscles stretch easily and 'give' readily as you breath into the stretch. Capsules and ligaments are the least elastic and feel very tight to stretch. To gain flexibility they take long, strong and continuous stretching. Nerves are a little elastic but don't feel great to stretch. They also require long sustained stretching preferably straight after exercise.

My advice is to learn some anatomy to know the structures you are stretching - read books, go online, ask questions of knowledgeable people at your club or gym, study yoga, do a short course - its all fascinating information that can only be of benefit not just for karate, but in life.

HOW TO STRETCH

Most importantly be warm - your tissues won't gain in length unless they are warm and elastic. This means an adequate warm up that lifts your heart rate, reddens your skin and begins to lightly sweat.

Take a stretch in the desired muscle:

- be balanced, breathing easily and focus on nothing else besides the muscle
- make it a strong stretch that is just short of being painful
- keep breathing slowly and deeply
- listen to the feedback information from the muscle - it will let you know when you can take up some slack - generally after 15 - 20 seconds
- take up this slack and hold for a further 10 seconds or so
- slowly release the stretch and shake out the area

ORDER OF STRETCHING

If you have found that you have 'plateaued' in your flexibility gains, it may help to release certain areas of the body first, which then helps subsequent areas of the body to release. Try this order of stretching where one area leads to another - it can give added focus:

- Lower back
- Gluteal muscles and hip joints
- Quadriceps
- Hip flexors
- Adductors
- Calves
- Hamstrings - last of all

Many athletes I have worked with have found this very effective to make flexibility gains. I watch many people try to stretch their hamstrings first yet there are many factors contributing to hamstring tightness including tight back, tight hips and tight adductors. Releasing them first enable you to get an almost pure hamstring stretch and hopefully the most effective and lasting release.

It is beyond the scope of this article to go through all the various stretches that are effective. I trust that you already have a good list that is relatively effective for you. What I am asking of you is to think about the process with more depth.

WHEN TO STRETCH

The short answer to this question is as often as possible - preferably everyday - even for a few minutes stretching your tightest areas.

The most effective time is when you are the warmest, for example, immediately after class. Find an 'out of the way' area on the tatami (making sure this is o.k. with Sensei) or somewhere else in the dojo. Spend some quality time doing really strong stretching especially on the tissues you feel you need improvement in. This is the time you will make the most lasting gains in your flexibility and it will help reduce soreness, aiding your recovery.

OTHER TIPS

- Perhaps get a group of fellow students together to help each other - partner stretching is how many international athletes gain flexibility.
- You could hold small workshops each week where one of you introduces a new stretch that they have researched.
- If you get the opportunity to lead the warm-up of a class, try to incorporate stretching into the activity, for example:
 - pulsing on the balls of your feet (which works the calf muscles) followed immediately by stretching the calves.
 - performing some squats and leaps (working the gluteals and quads) followed by stretching these muscles etc.

CONCLUSION

Flexibility, along with power, coordination and concentration is one of the great gifts of practicing karate. To enhance this gift with some extra knowledge and time will go a long way to improving not only your karate but also your fitness and health in general.

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RITUALIZED COMBAT

Ritualized Combat was termed by a police trainer by the name of Roland Ouellette. Basically, these "body language signs" are rituals that the human body will, in most cases, go through just prior, during, and after a physical confrontation (not so different from the animal kingdom). These signs are important, why? Because they are really good warning signals to let you know what your potential attacker may be contemplating, even though he may not be "verbally" communicating this fact to you. Ritualized Combative signs have been both scientifically and empirically researched in such fields as "Human Performance" and "Neuro Linguistic Psychology." Here in Canada, I have used "Ritualized Combative Signs" successfully in the Courts during expert testimony in Self-Defense cases. I also possess hundreds of hours of videotape of actual street fights, and when reviewed both in real time and in slow motion, everyone of the Ritualized Combative signs that I share in my articles and training, are seen prior, during, and after these fights. This is why I believe that all in the self-protection field should know about "Ritualized Combat". So what are these signs?

Assault Not Imminent But Possible:

- Head, neck, shoulders go back (person making themselves look bigger)
- Face is red, twitching, jerking
- Lips pushed forward bearing teeth (you see the same things in dogs before attack)
- Breathing is fast and shallow (oxygenating the body preparing for fight, flight, hyper vigilance)
- Beads of sweat appear about the face/neck
- Thousand mile glare
- Exaggerated movements
- Finger pointing/ head pecking
- Totally ignores you
- Gives you excessive attention during normal conversation such as direct uninterrupted eye contact
- Goes from totally uncooperative to totally cooperative (people do not go from hot to cold they de-escalate over time)
- Acts stoned or drunk
- Directs anger towards other inanimate items such as tables, chairs, walls

If you find yourself confronted by a subject presenting these signs, awareness/self protection strategies should go up, and distance should be created. Your body language should be assertive but not threatening and don't be afraid to allow the person to vent verbally.

Assault Is Imminent:

- Face goes from red to white (during a physical confrontation the blood will leave the surface of the body and pool to the big muscles and internal organs of the body needed for survival) In my job as a police officer I see this all the time and when I do one of two things are going to happen, the suspect is either going to fight or run
- Lips tighten over teeth

- Breathing is fast and deep
- Change of stance, their body blades and shoulder drops
- Hands closed into a fist (not uncommon to see the whites of knuckles due to hands being so tight)
- Bobbing up and down or rocking back and forth on feet (this is the bodies way to hide/ mask the initial movement of a first strike)
- Target glance (here you will see your opponent look to where he is going to hit, or where he is going to run/escape)
- Putting head and chin down (body wants to protect the airway, this action does so to a degree)
- Eye brows brought forward into a frown(again the body wants to naturally protect the visual system, this action does so to a degree)
- Stops all movements/ freezes in place
- Dropping center or lowering of body (no different that a cat or dog getting ready to pounce)
- Shedding clothes (very common, you will see your attacker take his hat, coat, shirt, or bag off just prior to the assault)
- One syllable replies (go from full sentences to one syllable replies..... reptilian brain is clicking in)

In this group of signs, you have about 1-1.5 seconds to act before your attacker either attacks or runs. If walking and talking your way out is inappropriate or unreasonable, then I teach "First Strike" philosophy, and continue on with a compound attack until your attacker is no longer a risk.

In both the Assault not Imminent and Assault Imminent phases, I do teach my students (in some situations) to bring to the attention of the attacker what they are seeing why:

1) The attacker may not know what they are doing. A lot of these signs are autonomic in nature, meaning they happen without conscious thought.

2) The bigger reason, I believe, is for this purpose; most attackers will only attack you when they believe that they have the element of surprise. By sharing with them what you see, you take this primary tactic away from them.

IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU SHOULD NOT LET THE PERSON KNOW WHAT YOU ARE SEEING, THUS USING THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE!!!!!!!!!!!!

If you have been able to de-escalate the situation you have found yourself in, non-verbally, verbally or physically, also look for these Ritualized Combat signs that are good indicators to let you know that your opponent is no longer thinking about fighting:

Signs Of Submission:

- Putting hands up in front of body with palms facing out.... (universal sign for stop stay back)
- Face returns to normal skin tone and color

- Shaking hand. (almost as if the person has Alzheimer's disease.... This shaking can be slight to extreme bodies natural way to burn out the adrenaline, nor-adrenalin, epinephrine that it dumped into the body for fight,flight,hypervigilance but was not used)
- Turning of back with their hands covering their head (ensure you can see their hands if not create distance NOW)
- Backing off
- Bowing of head and lowering of eyes
- Verbal tone, volume, rate, slows back to normal / full sentences once again
- Falling to the ground almost in a fetal position
- Grooming gestures (this one is weird but you will see it time and time again... person will adjust their clothing, play with their hair/mustache/beard, pick lint of their body..... you see this in cat and dogs after they fight and then groom themselves)

In all of the above noted signs, don't just look for one, but rather clusters of two or more. If you see one and know what to look for, you will see others guaranteed. As a police officer who has been involved in many physical encounters, I can share with you and others that "Ritualized Combat" is a tool that you can use to your advantage. Many of my students , who are not police officers, who have found themselves in 'situations" have also echoed the tactical benefit of such knowledge. One should also remember that a skilled attacker "may" be able to mask some of these signs, so never drop you guard and fall into a false sense of confidence !!!!! Also remember that if the voice and body don't match, always believe the body because the voice can LIE !!!!! If your attacker is verbalizing the fact that he doesn't want to fight, but yet he is showing Ritualized Combative signs that show otherwise, he's a LLPOF (liar, liar pants on fire)

Some people who don't know about Ritualized Combat, call it "gut instinct/intuition" They are right !!!!! The reason it is a "gut instinct/intuition" rather than a known empirical thing, is because no one has explained to them what "Ritualized Combat" is. What is happening in the "gut/ instinct" group, is that their "subconscious/reptilian brain" is picking up on these signs (rather than the conscious critical mind), thus turning on the warning bells. Some listen (the more experience), but most do not. Why can I say this? I am also a certified hypnotherapist and working towards my masters in Neuro Linguistic Psychology.

Considering the amount of knowledge out there, are there any other Ritualized Combative signs, that can be added to one of these three categories ????

Knowledge and the understanding of that knowledge is power !!!!!

Strength and Honor

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RUNNING INJURIES, SPORTS INJURIES & TREATMENT FOR PULLED MUSCLES

A guide to cutting your recovery time by days, if not weeks!

Part 1

I get a lot of questions from people asking about specific treatments for sports injuries, like running injuries and other common pulled muscle complaints. The unfortunate thing about most of these requests is that the injury occurred some time ago. This time lapse between the injury occurring, and treatment sort, is the biggest stumbling block to a full and complete recovery.

As always, before I sit down to write this newsletter, I like to spend a few hours surfing the net for information that relates to the topic I'm going to write about. In most cases, I find a great deal of useful information that relates to what I'm looking for; but not this time.

What I did find, was a lot of information which related to treating specific sports injuries long after they'd occurred. However, I found very little information relating to the immediate treatment of sports injuries. This was quite disappointing, because if people are only treating injuries long after they've occurred, they're really putting themselves at a great disadvantage.

What follows is a complete three part series of the most appropriate initial treatments for all soft tissue, sports injuries. This information will definitely cut your recover time by days, if not weeks.

Before we start!

Lets have a quick look at the type of injuries I'm talking about. The type of sports injuries I'm referring to here are the soft tissue injuries, which are very common in most, if not all sports. These injuries include sprains, strain, tears and bruises which affect muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints. The soft tissues of the body.

Examples of common soft tissue injuries would include things like hamstring tears, sprained ankles, pulled calf muscles, strained shoulder ligaments, carked thigh, etc. Remember a sprain refers to a tear or rupture of the ligaments, while a strain refers to a tear or rupture of the muscles or tendons.

The sort of injuries I'm NOT talking about here are injuries which affect the head, neck, face or spinal cord. Injuries which involve shock, excessive bleeding, or bone fractures and breaks. The treatment of these type of injuries goes way beyond the relatively simple soft tissue injuries that I'm discussing here.

Priority Number 1

The first priority when treating any sports injury is, "Do No Further Damage." So before we get into the treatment of soft tissue injuries, there's one important point that I should discuss first.

Before you start treating any injury, whether to yourself or someone else, first STOP and take account of what has occurred. Consider things like; ..is the area safe from other dangers? ..is there a threat to life? ..is the injury serious enough to seek emergency help? Then, using the word STOP as an acronym;

S: (stop) Stop the injured person from moving. Consider stopping the sport or game if necessary.

T: (talk) Ask questions like; ..what happened? ..how did it happen? ..what did it feel like? ..where does it hurt? ..have you injured this part before?

O: (observe) Look for things like swelling, bruising, deformity and tenderness.

P: (prevent) Remember, do no further damage. Prevent further injury.

Once you've taken a few moments to make sure the injury isn't life threatening, it's then time to start treating the injury. Remember, the sooner you start treating a sports injury, the more chance you have of a full and complete recovery. The longer you wait, the worse it's going to be.

R.I.C.E.R.

Without a doubt, the most effective, initial treatment for soft tissue injuries is the R.I.C.E.R. regime. This involves the application of (R) rest, (I) ice, (C) compression, (E) elevation and obtaining a (R) referral for appropriate medical treatment.

Where the R.I.C.E.R. regime has been used immediately after the occurrence of an injury, it has been shown to significantly reduce recovery time. R.I.C.E.R. forms the first, and perhaps most important stage of injury rehabilitation, providing the early base for the complete recovery of injury.

When a soft tissue injury occurs there is a large amount of uncontrolled bleeding around the injury site. This excessive bleeding causes swelling, which puts pressure on nerve endings and results in increased pain. It is exactly this process of bleeding, swelling and pain which the R.I.C.E.R. regime will help to alleviate. This will also limit tissue damage and help the healing process.

The "How To"

R: (rest) It is important that the injured area be kept as still as possible. If necessary support the injured area with a sling or brace. This will help to slow down blood flow to the injured area and prevent any further damage.

I: (ice) By far the most important part. The application of ice will have the greatest effect on reducing bleeding, swelling and pain. Apply ice as soon as possible after the injury has occurred.

How do you apply ice? Crushed ice in a plastic bag is usually best. However, blocks of ice, commercial cold packs and bags of frozen peas will all do fine. Even cold water from a tap is better than nothing at all.

When using ice, be careful not to apply it directly to the skin. This can cause "ice burns" and further skin damage. Wrapping the ice in a damp towel generally provides the best protection for the skin.

How long? How often? This is the point where few people agree. Let me give you some figures to use as a rough guide, and then I'll give you some advice from personal experience. The most common recommendation is to apply ice for 20 minutes every 2 hours for the first 48 to 72 hours.

These figures are a good starting point, but remember they're only a guide. You must take into account that some people are more sensitive to cold than others. Also be aware that children and elderly people have a lower tolerance to ice and cold. Finally, people with circulatory problems are also more sensitive to ice. Remember to keep these things in mind when treating yourself or someone else with ice.

Personally, I recommend that people use their own judgment when applying ice to themselves. For some people, 20 minutes is way too much. For others, especially well conditioned athletes, they can leave ice on for up to an hour at a time. The individual should make the decision as to how long the ice should stay on.

My personal recommendation is that people should apply ice for as long as it is comfortable. Obviously, there will be a slight discomfort from the cold, but as soon as pain or excessive discomfort is experienced, it's time to remove the ice. It's much better to apply ice for 3 to 5 minutes a couple of times an hour, than not at all.

C: (compression) Compression actually achieves two things. Firstly, it helps to reduce both the bleeding and swelling around the injured area, and secondly, it provides support for the injured area. Simply use a wide, firm, elastic, compression bandage to cover the injured part. Make sure you bandage both above and below the injured area.

E: (elevation) Simply raise the injured area above the level of the heart at all possible times. This will further help to reduce the bleeding and swelling.

R: (referral) If the injury is severe enough, it is important that you consult a professional physical therapist or a qualified sports doctor for an accurate diagnosis of the injury. With an accurate diagnosis, you can then move onto a specific rehabilitation program to further reduce your injury time.

Before we finish up, there are a few things which you must avoid during the first 24 to 72 hours after an injury. Be sure to avoid any form of heat at the injury site. This includes heat lamps, heat creams, spa's, Jacuzzi's and sauna's.

Avoid all movement and massage of the injured area. Also avoid excessive alcohol. All these things will increase the bleeding, swelling and pain of your injury. Avoid them at all costs.

Next Month

The above information takes care of the first 48 to 72 hours. Follow the above advice and you'll cut your recovery time by days, if not weeks. But what happens after R.I.C.E.R.? There's still a little way to go before you're completely over that injury. To view next months issue, and the next phase of your rehabilitation, go to <http://www.thestretchinghandbook.com/archives/sports-injuries-pt2.htm>.

As always, I truly hope you've enjoyed this month's issue of The Stretching & Sports Injury Newsletter. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter or any other aspect of this web site, please feel free to contact me at the following e-mail address. admin@thestretchinghandbook.com

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THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPACT TRAINING

A few year's ago some friends and I went to a demonstration to see some supposed "black belts" demonstrate their skills. I was very disappointed not to mention startled at how ineffective their technique was considering their rank. I should point out that these practitioners were not traditional karateka, but studied another martial art which will remain nameless!

Why was I startled? The effectiveness of their punches was minimal. About six black belts lined up and one after the other, hit a pad held by another black belt at the front of the line. I didn't see any drive from the legs, any hip rotation and as a result minimal impact. As I picked my jaw up off the floor, I pinched myself to make sure this was really happening. Questions started shooting through my mind such as....

- What rank were they *really*?
- Where did they get those black belts?
- How long had they been training?
- Did they actually practice hitting anything other than fresh air?

Seriously I have seen students who have been training only a couple of weeks hit with more force than these guys. Quite simply it was embarrassing. We then had to witness the ineffectiveness of the kicking demonstration which again lacked severely.

I realized how lucky I was to have learned how to punch effectively. And while many styles of martial arts and schools are fantastic at teaching theory about punching effectively, many only practice fresh air techniques. If you are only learning to punch the air, how on earth are you going to be effective when you have to really hit something or someone?

If we take a step back and look at karate history we see that the effectiveness of technique was traditionally tested and practiced in several different ways.

Firstly, the makiwara was developed for students for exactly this purpose. A makiwara is a punching board. The head usually has layers of straw padding, bound with rope and covered in canvas, while the other end is buried and held in place by the earth. When struck the makiwara provides some give as the board moves because the head isn't secured. Students would spend hours perfecting their technique on a makiwara. Of course there weren't any "bag gloves" used when doing this, so if you punched off line or grazed the makiwara, you would often tear the skin on your knuckles. (A good incentive to focus and punch straight!) The other important aspect of makiwara training was the requirement to focus or develop kime. After much practice the only thing the student would be focussed on is the makiwara and nothing else when delivering the technique. At the point of impact the mind, body and spirit become one and the effectiveness of the technique reaches its peak.

Secondly, technique effectiveness has been measured historically by breaking bricks, tiles, wood or ice. Again this required a high level of focus. The item being struck was held in place by another training partner or supported on a stand in which case the person breaking the item usually strikes downwards.

Thirdly, technique effectiveness was measured in battle! This was one sure way to know if what you practiced actually worked. If your focus or technique was ineffective, your adversaries would surely take advantage!

Turning to these methods for present-day training, we see they pose some problems:

Makiwara

- It's stationary and not easily moved around.
- Difficult to use for kicking.

Wood, bricks, tiles or ice

- As above plus...

- If you do not hit correctly it can take months to get over the injuries you might sustain.
- Sometimes the position when breaking these items is not related to a combat situation so it can be argued there is little point practicing something that you won't use.

Battle!

- It's illegal!
- It's dangerous!

So if all of these historical methods aren't really an option to improve the impact and effectiveness of your technique, what else is there available? Punching bag? Speed ball? Ceiling to floor ball?

Yes, all of these are options, however they also have their downfalls.

Punching bag

- It's stationary.
- Too big and bulky to measure technique effectiveness properly.

Speed ball

- Doesn't measure impact or correct punching technique, only speed.
- Have you ever seen anyone hit a person they way they hit a speed ball?
(cartoons excluded!)

Ceiling to Floor ball

- Excellent tool for foot work, body movement and timing.
- Not great for measuring impact.

Given the downfalls of all of these training tools, a good training tool for measuring impact must have the following qualities. It must:

- absorb the shock
- be reusable
- be mobile
- minimize the chance of injury
- be able to measure the effectiveness of the technique
- be able to be struck by both hand and leg techniques

For those of you who study Shukokai/Shitoryu you will be aware of the following training tool that meets the above criteria. It was developed by Kimura Sensei and is widely used today in Shukokai/Shitoryu schools throughout the world.

The Impact Pad

The impact pad is made of dense foam rubber material, similar to the material that is used to make swimming kickboards or body boards. The pad is roughly 30cm square and 5cm thick. Two or more of these are placed together and bound by a belt or strap.

To use an impact pad all you require is a training partner to hold it for you. When practicing punching, the "target" holds the pad firmly against their chest and stands square on, in yoi dachi (feet shoulder width apart). The "punching person" then takes their stance and hits the pad in much the same way as striking a makiwara. ie. with complete focus hitting the center of the pad.

The best thing about the impact pad is its versatility. It can be held against the chest for punching or striking with other techniques, such as ridge hand (haito uchi). It can also be held against the stomach area for front kick (mae geri) or the "target person" can stand side on to the "kicking person" so they can practice mawashi geri. In fact just about all techniques can be practiced using an impact pad.

One of the key benefits to using an impact pad for impact training is that when you do an effective technique you will know immediately. The person holding the pad can give you direct feedback as to the direction and force of your technique. They can tell you immediately if you are a little off line or if your technique has power.

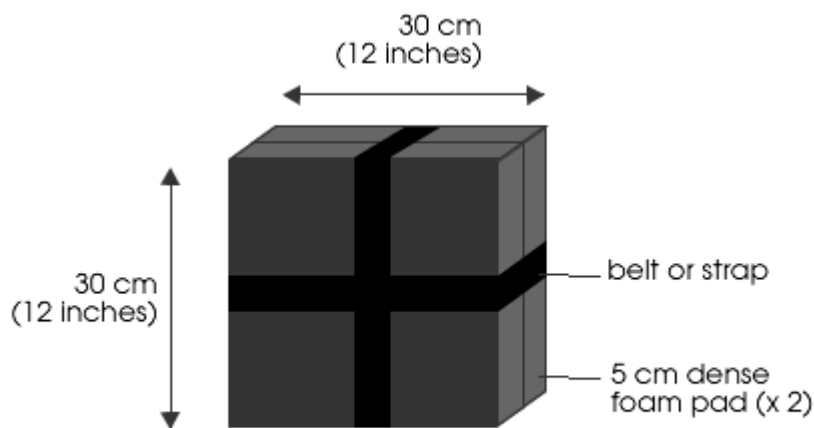
The impact pad is also an excellent tool because it's held in the exact positions that you would strike if you were striking a person. Therefore you can instantly see if your technique was effective as the "target person" should be physically moved by the force of your technique. (Be careful to strike and not to push!)

It's also a great tool for improving speed and effectiveness with multiple attackers. You can use multiple pads in drills and exercises with three or four people surrounding the "striking person". Each "target" can hold the pad in different positions and on command the "striking person" must hit each target effectively, one after the other using different techniques.

Finally you can use the impact pad with a mobile target. The person holding the pad can move around and then stop, giving you a target to hit. eg. chest for punching, thigh for roundhouse kick, or stomach for front kick. This is a great way to test your impact with a moving target. Hitting a moving target or hitting while you are moving, is a whole new ball game compared to when you and the target are both stationary!

Here is a summary of the benefits of using an impact pad...

- it absorbs the impact of the technique
- it is reusable
- it is versatile
- it is mobile
- the chance of injury is minimized
- it is a good way to measure the effectiveness of your technique
- provides realistic resistance as though hitting a person
- the cost to make one is far less than buying a bag or making a makiwara



Impact Pad Diagram

Impact training should be something that you practice often. Refining your technique and constantly putting it to the test will ensure the quality and effectiveness of your technique continues to develop. For if you only

practice hitting fresh air, then you will only be able to hit fresh air really well.... not so great when it comes to the crunch!

As with anything, before you rush out and attempt to use an impact pad, you should practice it under the supervision of a qualified and experienced instructor. Injury can result if used incorrectly. With that said, when done correctly, impact pad training is one of the best ways to improve the power and impact of just about all of your karate techniques!

I hope you enjoyed this article and that you can use impact pad training at your school. If you teach then perhaps you can introduce the impact pad to your class (with the permission of your sensei of course). In future articles we'll look at the exact methods to get the most out of your training with impact pads.

WARM UP ACTIVITIES & STRETCHING EXERCISES

Warm up properly, and reduce the risk of sports injury!

The warm up activities are a crucial part of any exercise regime or sports training. The importance of a structured warm up routine should not be underestimated when it comes to the prevention of sports injury.

The Warm Up

An effective warm up has a number of very important key elements. These elements, or parts, should all be working together to minimize the likelihood of sports injury from physical activity.

Warming up prior to any physical activity does a number of beneficial things, but primarily its main purpose is to prepare the body and mind for more strenuous activity. One of the ways it achieves this is by helping to increase the body's core temperature, while also increasing the body's muscle temperature. By increasing muscle temperature you're helping to make the muscles loose, supple and pliable.

An effective warm up also has the effect of increasing both your heart rate and your respiratory rate. This increases blood flow, which in turn increases the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the working muscles. All this helps to prepare the muscles, tendons and joints for more strenuous activity.

Keeping in mind the aims or goals of an effective warm up, we can then go on to look at how the warm up should be structured.

Obviously, it's important to start with the easiest and most gentle activity first, building upon each part with more energetic activities, until the body is at a physical and mental peak. This is the state in which the body is most prepared for the physical activity to come, and where the likelihood of sports injury has been minimized as much as possible. So, how should you structure your warm up to achieve these goals?

There are four key elements, or parts, which should be included to ensure an effective and complete warm up. They are:

The general warm up;

Static stretching;

The sports specific warm up; and

Dynamic stretching.

All four parts are equally important and any one part should not be neglected or thought of as not necessary. All four elements work together to bring the body and mind to a physical peak, ensuring the athlete is prepared for the activity to come. This process will help ensure the athlete has a minimal risk of sports injury.

Lets have a look at each element individually.

1.) General warm up

The general warm up should consist of a light physical activity. Both the intensity and duration of the general warm up (or how hard and how long), should be governed by the fitness level of the participating athlete.

Although a correct general warm up for the average person should take about five to ten minutes and result in a light sweat.

The aim of the general warm up is simply to elevate the heart rate and respiratory rate. This in turn increases the blood flow and helps with the transportation of oxygen and nutrients to the working muscles. This also helps to increase the muscle temperature, allowing for a more effective static stretch. Which bring us to part two.

2.) Static stretching

Static stretching is a very safe and effective form of basic stretching. There is a limited threat of injury and it is extremely beneficial for overall flexibility. During this part of the warm up, static stretching should include all the major muscle groups, and this entire part should last for about five to ten minutes.

Static stretching is performed by placing the body into a position whereby the muscle, or group of muscles to be stretched is under tension. Both the opposing muscle group (the muscles behind or in front of the stretched muscle), and the muscles to be stretched are relaxed. Then slowly and cautiously the body is moved to increase the tension of the muscle, or group of muscles to be stretched. At this point the position is held or maintained to allow the muscles and tendons to lengthen.

This second part of an effective warm up is extremely important, as it helps to lengthen both the muscles and tendons which in turn allows your limbs a greater range of movement. This is very important in the prevention of muscle and tendon injuries.

The above two elements form the basis, or foundation for a complete and effective warm up. It is extremely important that these two elements be completed properly before moving onto the next two elements. The proper completion of elements one and two, will now allow for the more specific and vigorous activities necessary for elements three and four.

3.) Sport specific warm up

With the first two parts of the warm up carried out thoroughly and correctly, it is now safe to move onto the third part of an effective warm up. In this part, the athlete is specifically preparing their body for the demands of their particular sport. During this part of the warm up, more vigorous activity should be employed. Activities should reflect the type of movements and actions which will be required during the sporting event.

4.) Dynamic stretching

Finally, a correct warm up should finish with a series of dynamic stretches. However, this form of stretching carries with it a high risk of injury if used incorrectly. It should really only be used under the supervision of a professional sports coach or trainer. Dynamic stretching is more for muscular conditioning than flexibility and is really only suited for professional, well trained, highly conditioned athletes. Dynamic stretching should only be used after a high level of general flexibility has been established.

Dynamic stretching involves a controlled, soft bounce or swinging motion to force a particular body part past its usual range of movement. The force of the bounce or swing is gradually increased but should never become radical or uncontrolled.

During this last part of an effective warm up it is also important to keep the dynamic stretches specific to the athletes particular sport. This is the final part of the warm up and should result in the athlete reaching a physical and mental peak. At this point the athlete is most prepared for the rigors of their sport or activity.

The above information forms the basis of a complete and effective warm up. However, I am well aware that this entire process is somewhat of an 'ideal' or 'perfect' warm up. I am also well aware that this is not always possible, or convenient in the real world. Therefore, the individual athlete must become responsible for assessing their own goals and adjusting their warm up accordingly.

For instance, the time you commit to your warm up should be relative to your level of involvement in your particular sport. So, for people just looking to increase their general level of health and fitness, a minimum of five to ten minutes would be enough. However, if you are involved in high level competitive sport you need to dedicate adequate time and effort to a complete warm up.

As always, I truly hope you've enjoyed this month's issue of The Stretching & Sports Injury Newsletter. If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter or any other aspect of this web site, please feel free to contact me at the following e-mail address. admin@thestretchinghandbook.com

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